

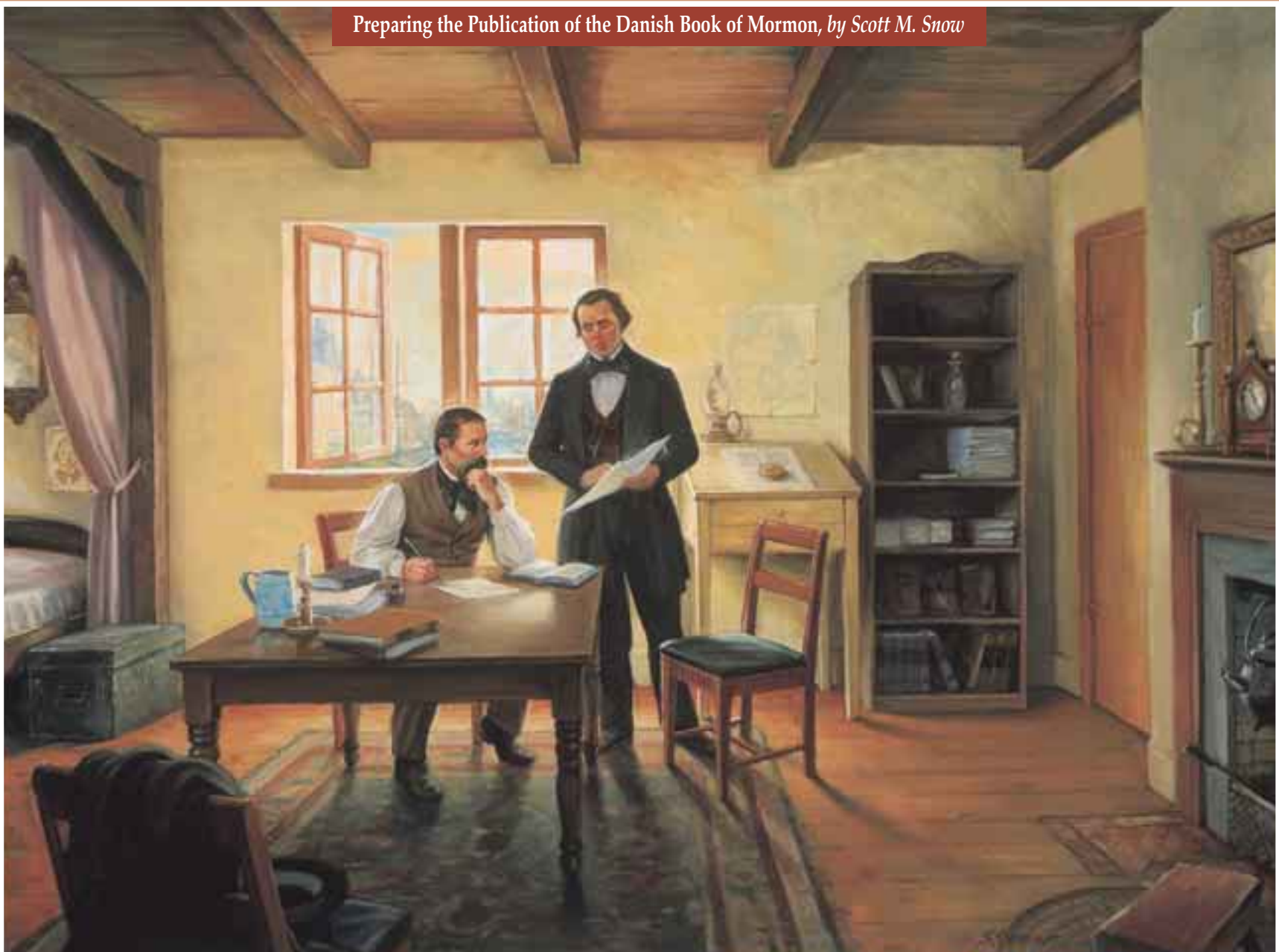
ENSIGN



Keep Negativism
Out of Marriage, p. 22

How to Increase
Participation in
Lessons, p. 32

Preparing the Publication of the Danish Book of Mormon, by Scott M. Snow



Elder Erastus Snow of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and Peter O. Hansen put the final proofreading touches on the Book of Mormon in Danish 150 years ago in Copenhagen. Its printing in 1851 was the first publication of the Book of Mormon in a language other than English.

ENSIGN

VOLUME 31 NUMBER 3

ON THE COVERS: **Front:** Photo by Tamra Ratieta. **Back:** Photo by Craig Dimond. **Inside front:** Preparing the Publication of the Danish Book of Mormon, by Scott M. Snow, oil on canvas, 36" x 48", 2000. **Inside back:** Land Bountiful, by Garth Oborn, oil on canvas, 40" x 60", 2000.

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WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE ?



BY PRESIDENT JAMES E. FAUST
Second Counselor in the First Presidency

I salute you young people as chosen, special spirits who have been reserved to come forth in this generation. You are beginning the struggle to discover who you are and to find your place in life. You have new, strong feelings. You have great challenges. I hope you are beginning to achieve and excel in some special way. Perhaps it is your smile, your personality, or your ability to lift others. Perhaps you are discovering your talent as an athlete, scholar, computer specialist, musician, builder, artist, or in a hundred different areas. This might give you some personal recognition. These accomplishments may cause you to think about who you really are.

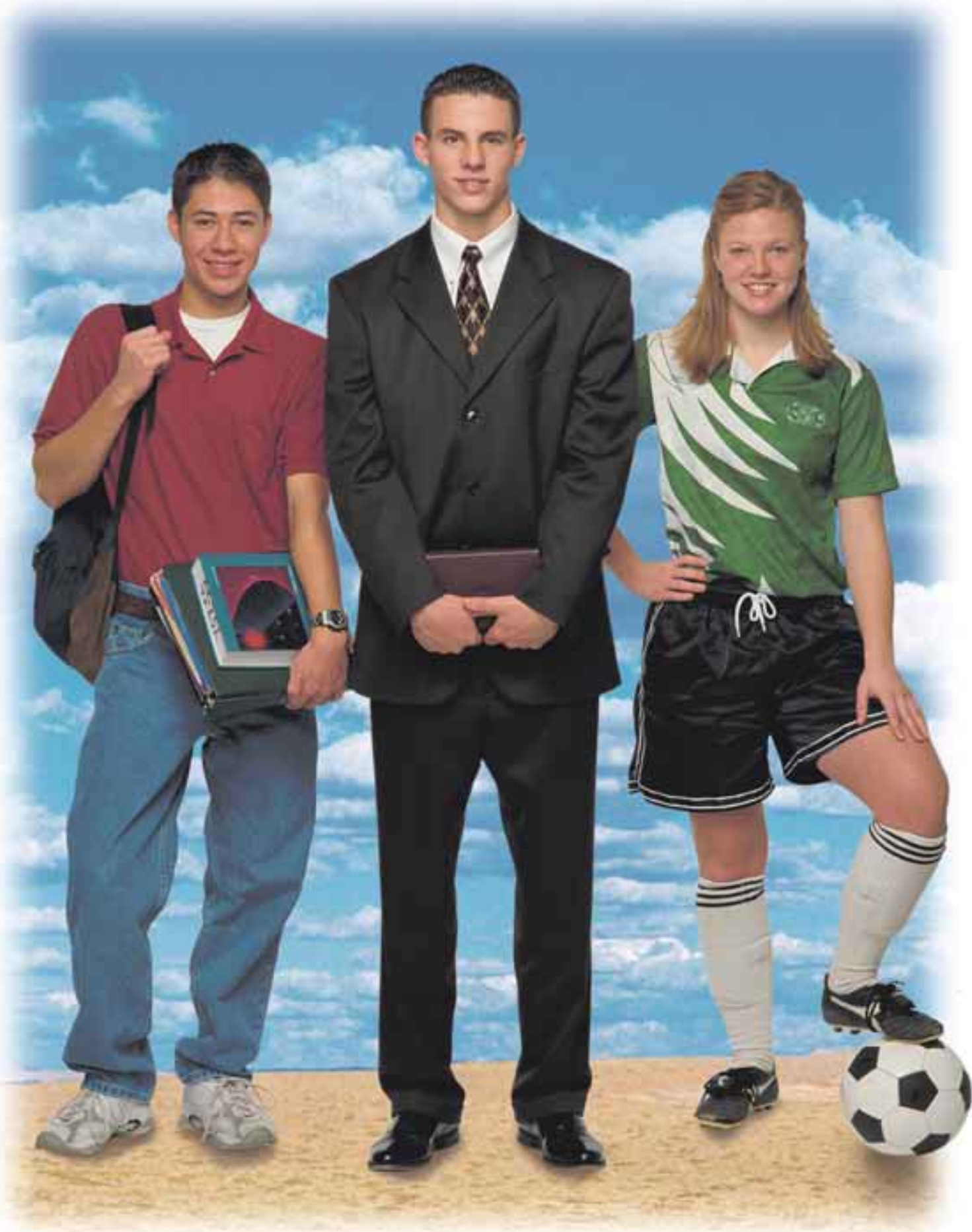
Dr. Fred Riley, a prominent social worker, has treated many athletes who identify themselves as athletes rather than as children of God. He relates: "What happens when they can't play basketball? Their identity is shot."¹ Their self-worth is related to their physical skills rather than their character. Many who achieve world-class recognition may not like themselves. Some of the rich and famous, even though they have great talent and ability, are insecure and succumb to drugs,

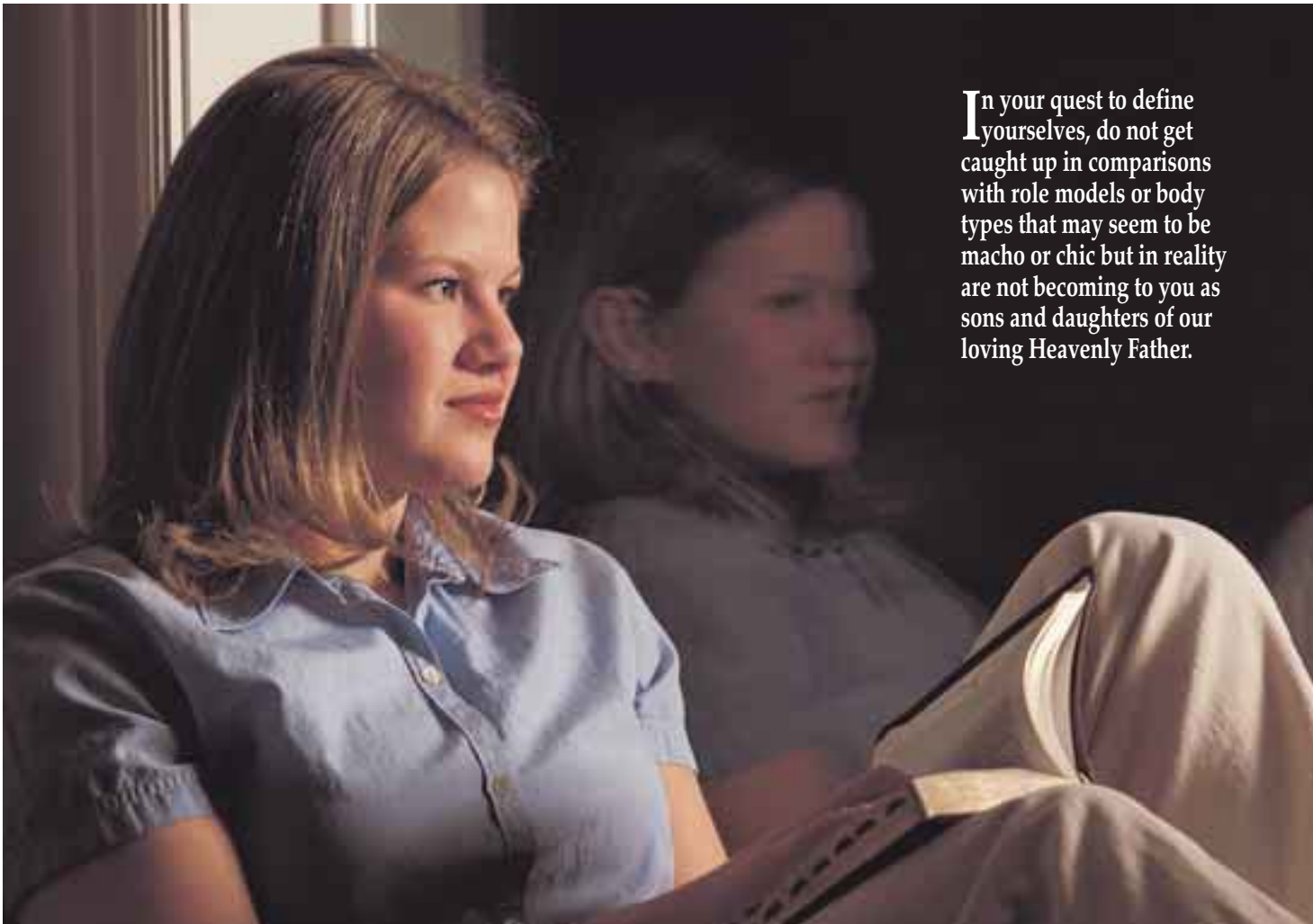
alcohol, or immorality, and their lives become shattered. Instead of being happy with who they are, they become dissatisfied and discontent. They measure their self-worth solely in terms of their talent and accomplishments instead of who they really are inside. It is not always true that the more you achieve, the happier you will be or that you will like yourself more.

As sons and daughters of God, we are obligated to develop as many of our divinely given talents as we can. All of us should work to achieve worthwhile objectives. We should learn skills and get an education. You will be happier if you know who you are and feel good about yourself.

So who do you think you are? Who you *think* you are and who you *really* are can be two different versions of yourself. From an eternal perspective, these two versions need to come together. God knows you and what you can become because He has known you from the beginning when you were His spirit sons and daughters. What you become will depend in large measure upon how you follow righteous principles and do good works.

As sons and daughters of God, we are obligated to develop as many of our divinely given talents as we can. All of us should work to achieve worthwhile objectives.





In your quest to define yourselves, do not get caught up in comparisons with role models or body types that may seem to be macho or chic but in reality are not becoming to you as sons and daughters of our loving Heavenly Father.

You may ask, “How do I learn to like myself?” I suggest five ideas that may be helpful.

1. CHANGE BAD BEHAVIOR.

We need to change our bad behavior. We need to repent. As Alma said to his son Corianton, “Wickedness never was happiness.”² It’s hard to like ourselves if we are doing things that we know to be wrong. Most of you have been taught about good behavior by your parents and youth leaders. You also have the scriptures and the pamphlet *For the Strength of Youth* to guide you.

In your quest to define yourselves, do not get caught up in comparisons with role models or body types that may seem to be macho or chic but in reality are not becoming to you as sons and daughters of our loving Heavenly Father. One 17-year-old girl became so obsessed about her figure that she began to skip meals and ended up with an eating disorder. When it became apparent to her father, he insisted that she eat a substantial meal. This confrontation ultimately brought her to her senses, and she wrote:

“All my life I had done things for everyone else. The grades, the manners, the awards—everything for them, nothing for me. This eating thing, this losing weight had become *mine*. It represented me and *my* choices, and now my dad was trying to take that away from me, too!

“As I lay in bed that night crying and feeling fat, I knew I needed help. I knew I was hurting people I loved.

“After staying up all night, I came to the conclusion that it wasn’t my dad I hated. I hated ME! I realized that I wasn’t in control. For the first time in my life, I understood that this was *my* problem. I needed to take control of my life—not let the disease control it.

“Things didn’t change overnight. In fact, it was one long road to recovery. But slowly, with the help of friends and family, I began to heal. Now that I’m at my ideal weight, I have stopped weighing myself altogether. I no longer peruse fashion magazines, either—I may not be ‘in style,’ but I feel just right!”³

Feeling “just right” about ourselves contributes to our happiness and our sense of identity.

As we change our bad behavior and turn to the Lord, we qualify for the companionship of the Holy Ghost, which has a profound effect upon our well-being. This great gift comes through righteous living, obedience to the commandments of God, and service to others. Parley P. Pratt had this insight concerning the gift of the Holy Ghost:

"It quickens all the intellectual faculties, increases, enlarges, expands and purifies all the natural passions and affections. . . . It inspires virtue, kindness, goodness, tenderness, gentleness and charity. . . . It invigorates all the faculties of the physical and intellectual man."⁴

2. FORGIVE OURSELVES AND OTHERS.

Forgiveness is an important part of putting bad behavior behind us. As we make the necessary changes, we need to forgive ourselves. But we may also need to forgive others who have been traveling with us on the wrong path. Forgiveness will help us to let go of the bad behavior we are forsaking. The Book of Mormon tells us how we can know that we have made the turn from bad to good. After King Benjamin had delivered his masterful discourse about Christ, the Nephites all cried with one voice:

"The Spirit of the Lord Omnipotent . . . has wrought a mighty change in us, or in our hearts, that we have no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually. . . ."

"And it is the faith which we have had on the things which our king has spoken unto us that has brought us to this great knowledge, whereby we do rejoice with such exceedingly great joy."⁵

Feeling joy and peace, we will know who we are and act accordingly.

3. GAIN CONFIDENCE BY MAKING GOOD CHOICES.

You are now beginning to make important choices. Choices have consequences. In some measure these choices will affect not only the rest of your life but all eternity. Remember, my young friends, fame and fortune do not necessarily mean happiness. It is far better to have confidence in yourself and to be comfortable in your own skin. This depends upon

your ability to choose what is right. It is also important to be able to excel in some field.

Last summer, the Olympic Games were held in Sydney, Australia. Certain rules and disciplines were attached to the various Olympic events: runners and swimmers had to stay in their lanes, shot-putters had to stay within the circle marked on the playing field, wrestlers had to stay on the mat—or the athletes would be disqualified. In addition, the use of performance-enhancing drugs was forbidden.

One young man from Denver, Colorado, who won an Olympic silver medal later was awarded the gold because the gold-medalist in his event was disqualified for using a banned steroid. In his response, he referred to his unfortunate competitor's loss of the medal:

"I do feel sorry for him. But we all have choices. . . . He made his choice, and I made my choice. . . ."

"I believe God was watching out for me. I believe

he watches out for all of us. I've learned so many lessons from how this has taken place. I experienced the agony of defeat before the thrill of victory. That made me so much more of a stronger person, mentally and spiritually."⁶

We grow and develop by making good choices. Confidence comes as we decide to pray daily, attend sacrament meetings, keep the Word of Wisdom, obey our parents and priesthood leaders, read the scriptures, and control our bodily appetites.

4. GIVE SERVICE.

If we really want to feel better about ourselves, we should do deeds of kindness. Kindness shapes our character and makes us more like our Father in Heaven. The Savior taught us, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."⁷ As we demonstrate

our love for others, in turn we will understand better the love our Savior has for each of us and that we are children of a loving Heavenly Father. Occasionally we should look for public service opportunities. Indeed, as a prominent psychiatrist once wrote: "We feel pleasure when we are involved with other people, and they are involved with us, but we feel pain when we are uninvolved and lonely. The path to an acceptable



Confidence comes as we decide to pray daily, attend sacrament meetings, keep the Word of Wisdom, obey our parents and priesthood leaders, read the scriptures, and control our bodily appetites.



Great satisfaction can come in helping the poor, the sick, the elderly, or others who have special needs. Look around you; there are all kinds of opportunities.

identity in any society is involvement.”⁸ Great satisfaction can come in helping the poor, the sick, the elderly, or others who have special needs. Look around you; there are all kinds of opportunities.

5. CHOOSE HAPPINESS.

The most fundamental of all human searches is for happiness. We each choose our own happiness. As President Harold B. Lee once said: “Happiness does not depend on what happens outside of you but on what happens inside of you. It is measured by the spirit with which you meet the problems of life.”⁹ It will often be necessary for all of us to choose between having a good time and leading a good life.

Each of us is born with natural “happiness” hormones. When stimulated, they secrete powerful chemical substances into our bodies. There are many kinds. Some are called endorphins. Generally when we are in pain or distress, endorphins give us a sense of well-being. Medical science has long known that our mental outlook and well-being affect our physical health. A sign in a large hospital says, “Laughter is the best medicine.” Smiling is good for the soul.

Smiling brings a glow to our countenances that radiates to others. Being friendly to our neighbors, to people at school, at church, or at work is a great way to show the Lord that we want to keep the covenant we made at baptism “to bear one another’s burdens, that they may be light.”¹⁰ I recommend friendliness because so many people are shy or lonely and need a kind word or smile. Lifting others expands our inner selves. It is also the way of the Master.¹¹ Like Anna in *The King and I*, I find whistling “a happy tune” and singing (especially when I am alone!) can also lighten my spirits.

Many years ago my father told us about going for a walk through the woods with an old friend, Judge Bringhurst. The judge sang so loudly along the way that he frightened all the wildlife. But my father said he enjoyed the judge’s singing so much that he didn’t mind not seeing any animals or birds. So when we laugh, smile, sing, whistle, or exercise, we seem to feel better. We either forget our concerns or they are put in better perspective. As we reach out to others, our happiness hormones are stimulated and we find our true selves.

I recall a study some years ago that was made to

determine what influences keep young people moving on the straight and narrow track. Of course there were several critical influences. All were important. They included the influence of parents, priesthood advisers, Young Women advisers, Scoutmasters, and peer association. But I was surprised to find that one golden thread of singular importance ran through this study. It was the belief that one day each of us would have to account for our actions to the Lord. Many believed that “the keeper of the gate is the Holy One of Israel; and he employeth no servant there; and there is none other way save it be by the gate; for he cannot be deceived, for the Lord God is his name.”¹² Those who had an eternal perspective had an extra amount of spiritual strength and resolve. Feeling a personal accountability to the Savior for our actions and stewardships and responding to it provide a profound spiritual protection.

Ralph Waldo Emerson gave a yardstick by which to measure our personal success. He wrote:

*What is success?
To laugh often and much;
To win the respect of intelligent
people
and the affection of children;
To earn the appreciation of honest
critics
and endure the betrayal of false
friends;
To appreciate beauty;
To find the best in others;
To leave the world a bit better,
whether by
a healthy child, a garden patch
or a redeemed social condition;
To know even one life has breathed
easier because you have lived;
This is to have succeeded.*

So who do you think you are? The Prophet Joseph Smith said, “If men do not comprehend the character of God, they do not comprehend themselves.”¹³ Knowing who you are—who you really are—is closely tied to knowing God, for you are His children. Following the simple suggestions I have outlined will help you know God and hence yourself. I believe in you, that you will be obedient and valiant and that you will receive the blessings of the Lord in your quest to establish your identity as His choice sons and daughters. □



Smilting brings a glow to our countenances that radiates to others.

Gospel topics: identity, repentance, forgiveness, choices, service

NOTES

1. Quoted in Sarah Jane Weaver, “Developing a Healthy Self-Regard,” *Church News*, 10 Feb. 1996, 2.
2. Alma 41:10.
3. Gabriella Tortes, “‘Gabby, You’re Sooo Skinny,’” in *Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul: 101 Stories of Life, Love and Learning*, comp. Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, Kimberly Kirberger (1997), 234–35; emphasis in original.
4. *Key to the Science of Theology*, 9th ed. (1965), 101.
5. Mosiah 5:2, 4.
6. Brandon Slay, quoted in “U.S. Wrestler Savors Gold, Even Though It Came Late,” *Deseret News*, 24 Oct. 2000, D3.
7. Matt. 22:39.
8. Quoted in *The Teachings of Harold B. Lee*, ed. Clyde J. Williams (1996), 477.
9. “A Sure Trumpet Sound: Quotations from President Lee,” *Ensign*, Feb. 1974, 78.
10. Mosiah 18:8.
11. See Luke 6:31.
12. 2 Ne. 9:41.
13. *History of the Church*, 6:303.

IDEAS FOR HOME TEACHERS

Some Points of Emphasis

You may wish to make these points in your home teaching discussions:

1. From an eternal perspective, who we think we are and who we really are need to become the same.
2. The following are ideas for learning to like who we are:
 - a. **Change bad behavior.** It is hard to like ourselves when we are doing things we know to be wrong.
 - b. **Forgive ourselves and others.** This will help us let go of the behavior we are forsaking.
 - c. **Gain confidence by making good choices.** We will feel better about ourselves when we choose what is right.
 - d. **Give service.** Great satisfaction can come in helping others.
 - e. **Choose happiness.** When we laugh, smile, sing, whistle, or exercise, we seem to feel better.
3. Knowing who we really are is closely tied to knowing God, for we are His children.

Discussion Helps

1. Relate your feelings about what helps make you feel truly successful.
2. Are there some scriptures, quotations, or stories in this article that the family might read aloud and discuss?
3. Would this discussion be better after a previsit chat with the head of the house? Is there a message from the bishop or quorum leader?

Missionary Work and the Atonement

The Atonement of Jesus Christ is rightfully seen as the central fact, the crucial foundation, and the chief doctrine of the plan of salvation, which we are called to teach.



personal sins of everyone else who would ever live in this world from Adam to the end of time.

Some of those blessings are unconditional, such as the gift of the Resurrection. Other of the blessings, at least the full realization of them, are very conditional, requiring the keeping of commandments, the performance of

ordinances, and living the life of a disciple of Christ.

Either way, the essential message of the gospel, the starting point for all other truths, is this from the Master's own lips: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."³ Thus the Atonement of Christ, which makes that return to the Father possible, is rightfully seen as the central fact, the crucial foundation, and the chief doctrine of the great and eternal plan of salvation—"our Heavenly Father's plan," which we are called to teach.

Little wonder, then, that the Apostle Paul, the greatest missionary the world has ever known (or at least one of them), said: "The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. . . . For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: *But we preach Christ crucified.*"⁴

THE "GOOD NEWS"

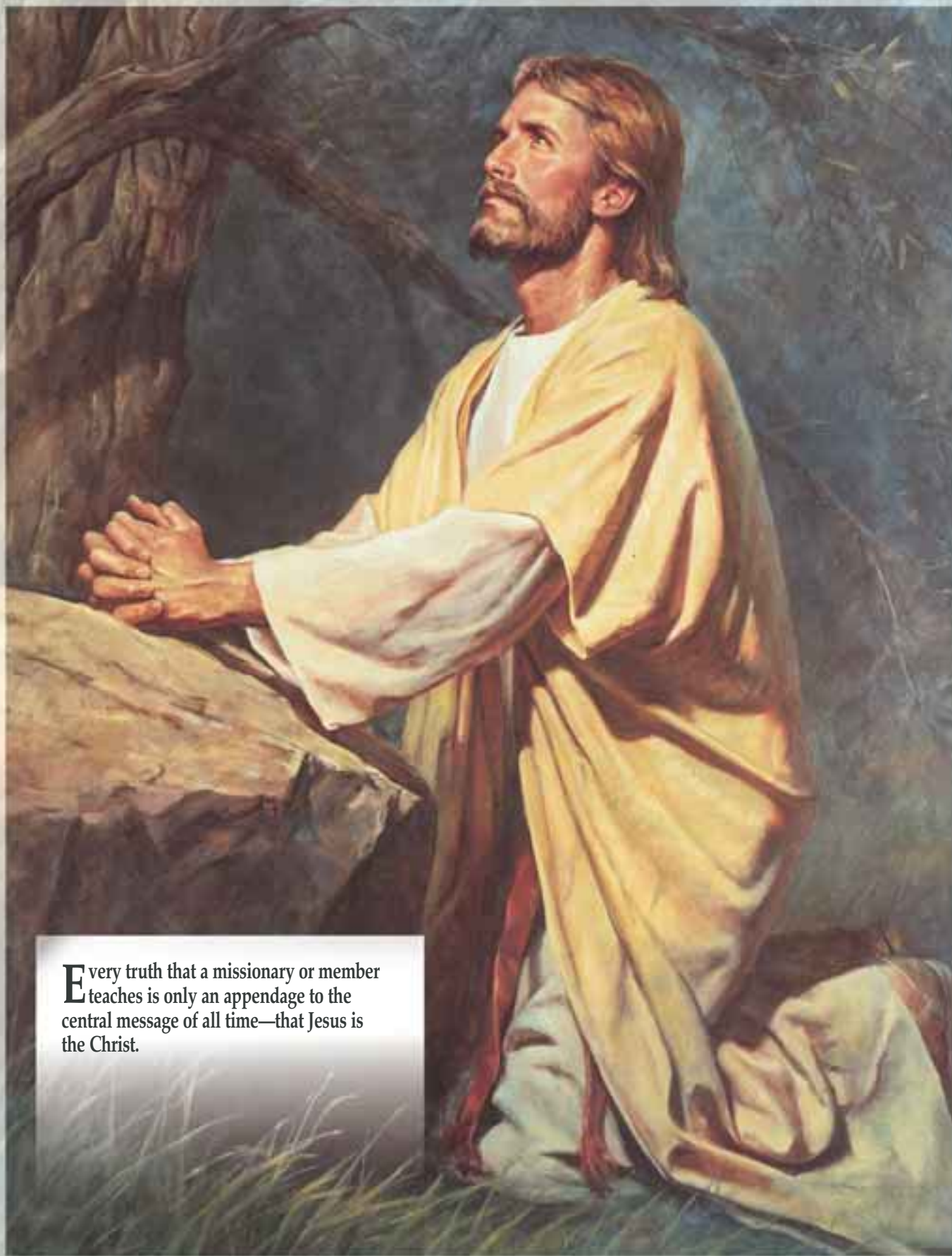
Inherent in all of this is a rather simple definition of the gospel, at least when considered in its essence. The word *gospel* as we use it in English comes down to us through early scriptural language which meant literally "good news" or sometimes "glad tidings." The "good news" was that death and hell could be



BY ELDER JEFFREY R. HOLLAND
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

The Prophet Joseph Smith once declared that all things "which pertain to our religion are only appendages" to the Atonement of Jesus Christ.¹ In like manner and for the same reasons, every truth that a missionary or member teaches is only an appendage to the central message of all time—that Jesus is the Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, the Holy Messiah, the Promised One, the Savior and Redeemer of the world; that He alone burst the bands of death and triumphed over the captivity of hell; that no one of us could ever have those same blessings without His intervention in our behalf; and that there never shall be any "other name given nor any other way nor means whereby salvation can come unto the children of men, [except] in and through the name of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent."²

Our basic message is that with a complete offering of His body, His blood, and the anguish of His spirit, Christ atoned for the initial transgression of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, and also for the



PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEVE BUNDERSON, EXCEPT AS NOTED, RIGHT: THE GREATEST OF ALL, BY DEL PARSON

Every truth that a missionary or member teaches is only an appendage to the central message of all time—that Jesus is the Christ.

escaped, that mistakes and sins could be overcome, that there was hope, that there was help, that the insoluble was solved, that the enemy had been conquered. The good news was that *everyone's* tomb could one day be empty, that *everyone's* soul could again be pure, that *every* child of God could again return to the Father who gave them life.

This is the essence of the message delivered by every prophet who has ever lived and every Apostle ever called to the work. It is the message we are called to declare. It is the message of the angel who came to those unsuspecting Judean shepherds:

"And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

"And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy [or, in other words, I bring you the *gospel* personified], which shall be to all people.

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."⁵

PREREQUISITES FOR BAPTISM

Probably there are very few missionaries, if any, who do not know the centrality of this doctrine. But I have been surprised to regularly be with the missionaries and discover that this is not something that readily comes forward in a discussion of missionary work.

For example, in zone conferences, which are some of the greatest teaching moments we as General Authorities have with these young elders and sisters,

I have asked missionaries what it is they want investigators to do as a result of their discussions with them.

"Be baptized!" is shouted forward in an absolute chorus.

"Yes," I say, "we do want them to be baptized, but what has to precede that?"

Now they are a little leery. *Aha*, they think. *This is a test. It is a test on the first discussion.* "Read the Book of Mormon!" someone shouts. "Pray!" an elder roars from the back of the room. "Attend church!" one of the sisters on the front row declares. "Receive all of the discussions!" someone else offers.

"Well, you have pretty much covered the commitments in the first discussion," I say, "but what else do you want your investigators to do?"

"Be baptized!" The chorus comes a second time.

"Elders," I plead, "you have already told me about baptism, and I am still asking!"

Well, now they *are* stumped. *It must be commitments from the other discussions*, they think. "Live the Word of Wisdom!" someone says. "Pay tithing!" another shouts. And so it goes.

I don't always run through this little exercise in a zone conference, but sometimes I do. And I have to say that almost never do the missionaries get around to identifying the two most fundamental things we want investigators to do prior to baptism: have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and repent of their sins. Yet "we believe that the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are: first, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, Repentance; [then] third, Baptism by immersion *for the remission of sins*;

The only way to salvation is through Gethsemane and on to Calvary. The only way to eternity is through Him—the Way, the Truth, and the Life.



PHOTO BY JOHN LUKE

fourth, Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost."⁶

A convert's new life is to be built upon faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His redeeming sacrifice—a conviction that He really is the Son of God, that He lives this very moment, that He really is the door of the sheepfold, that He alone holds the key to our salvation and exaltation. That belief is to be followed by true repentance, repentance which shows our desire to be clean and renewed and whole, repentance that allows us to lay claim to the full blessings of the Atonement.

Then comes baptism for the remission of sins. Yes, baptism is also for membership in the Church, but that isn't what the Prophet Joseph Smith chose to stress in that article of faith. He stressed that it was baptism for the remission of sins—focusing you and me, the missionary and the investigator again on the Atonement, on salvation, on the gift Christ gives us. This points that new convert toward the blessings of the "good news."

MAKING THE ATONEMENT CENTRAL TO MISSIONARY WORK

In an effort to keep our work closely linked to the Savior's ministry, let me suggest some things all of us might do to keep Christ and His Atonement in the forefront of members' and investigators' consciousness.

Encourage in every way possible more spiritual Church meetings, especially sacrament meetings. One of the great fears missionaries have at least in some locations is taking their investigators to church. And indeed the investigators deserve to feel essentially the same spirit in sacrament meeting that they feel when being taught by the missionaries.

It will also help orient investigators if missionaries will take some time to explain the ordinance of the sacrament that investigators will be witnessing, what it means for the renewing of baptismal covenants, that the emblems represent the Savior's body and blood, and so forth. Missionaries could read to these investigators the sacramental prayers as found in the scriptures, they could share some of the words of favorite sacrament hymns, or they could do any number of other things that would help these new visitors and prospective members have a powerful learning experience when they visit a sacrament meeting.

In like manner, do all that you can to make your baptismal services a spiritual, Christ-centered experience. A new convert deserves to have this be a sacred, carefully planned, and spiritually uplifting moment. The prayers, the hymns, surely the talks that are given—all ought to be focused on the significance of

this ordinance and the Atonement of Christ, which makes it efficacious.

Probably no other meeting we hold in the Church has the high referral and future baptismal harvest that a baptismal service does. Many of the investigators who attend a baptismal service (that is, the service of someone else being baptized) will go on to their own baptisms. That is more likely to occur if this service is a spiritual, strong teaching moment in which it is clear to participants and visitors alike that this is a sacred act of faith centered on the Lord Jesus Christ, that it is an act of repentance claiming the cleansing power of Christ, that through His majesty and Atonement it brings a remission of sins as well as, with confirmation, membership in His Church. Missionaries, don't get so consumed with the desire to record a baptism that you yourselves forget what this baptism represents and what it must mean in the life of this new member.

Throughout the teaching experience, missionaries must bear testimony of the Savior and His gift of salvation to us. Obviously you should bear testimony regularly of all the principles you are teaching, but it is especially important that you bear testimony of this central doctrine in the plan of our Heavenly Father.

There are several reasons for bearing testimony. One is that when you declare the truth, it will bring an echo, a memory, even if it is an unconscious memory to the investigator, that they have heard

this truth before—and of course they have. A missionary's testimony invokes a great legacy of testimony dating back to the councils in heaven before this world was. There, in an earlier place, these same people heard this same plan outlined and heard there the role that Jesus Christ would play in their salvation.

"And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and *the power of his Christ*: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

*"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."*⁷

So the fact of the matter is investigators are not only hearing our testimony of Christ, but they are hearing echoes of other, earlier testimonies, including their own testimony of Him, for they were on the side of the faithful who kept their first estate and earned the privilege of a second estate. We must always remember that these investigators, every man, woman, and child, were among the valiant who once overcame Satan by the power of their testimony of Christ! So when they hear others bear that witness of Christ's



Baptism is a sacred act of faith centered on the Lord Jesus Christ.

saving mission, it has a familiar feeling; it brings an echo of truth they themselves already know.

Furthermore, when you bear witness of “Jesus Christ, and him crucified,”⁸ to use Paul’s phrase, you invoke the power of God the Father and the Holy Ghost. The Savior Himself taught about bearing witness before any other doctrine when He visited the Nephites:

“After this manner shall ye baptize in my name; for behold, verily I say unto you, that the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost are one. . . .

“And this is my doctrine, and it is the doctrine which the Father hath given unto me. . . .

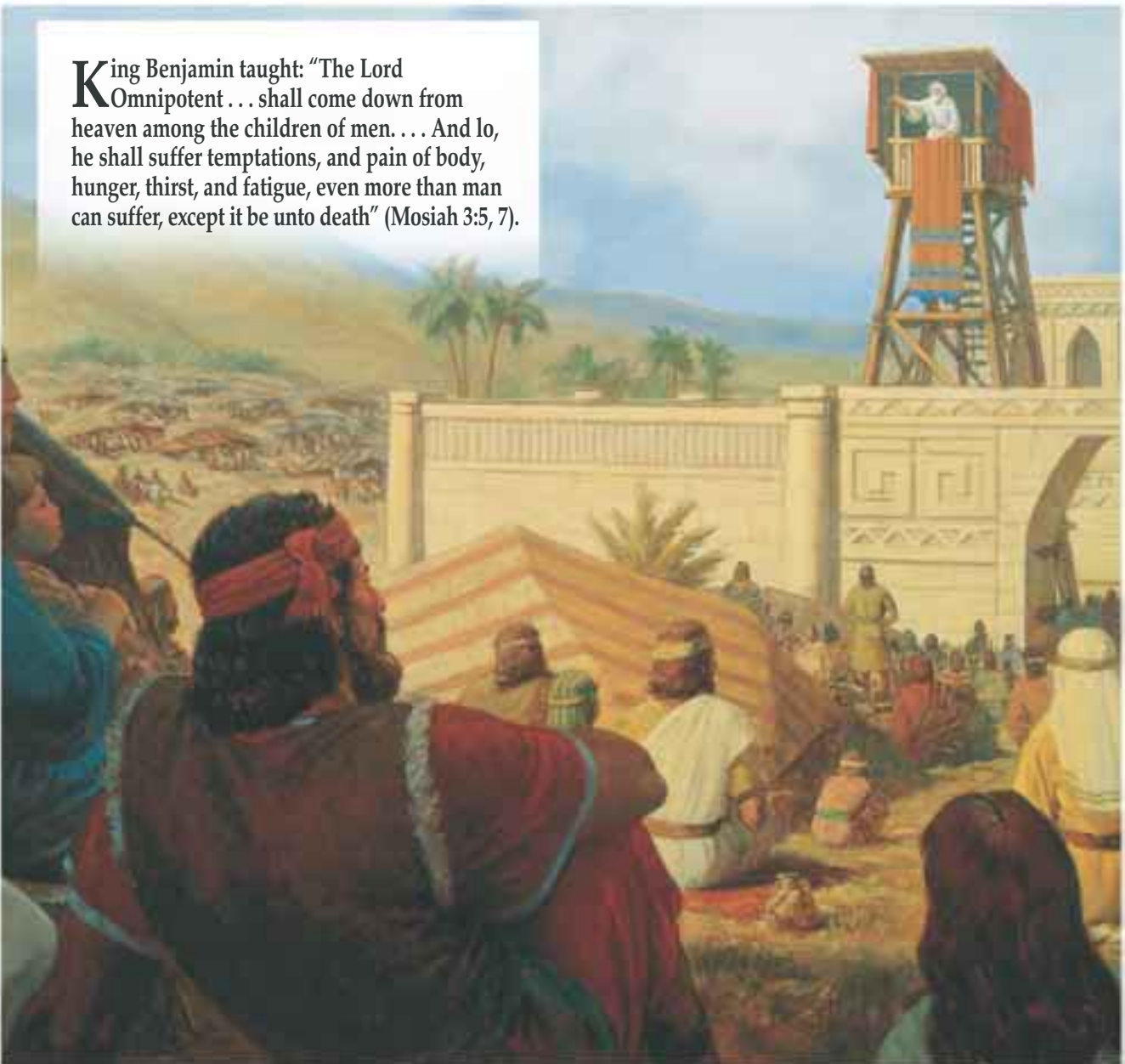
“ . . . Whoso believeth in me believeth in the Father also; and unto him [the investigator] will the Father bear record of me, for he will visit him [the investigator] with fire and with the Holy Ghost.

“And thus will the Father bear record of me, and the Holy Ghost will bear record unto him [the investigator] of the Father and me; for the Father, and I, and the Holy Ghost are one. . . .

“ . . . This is my doctrine, and whoso buildeth upon this buildeth upon my rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against them.”⁹

So why should we bear frequent and powerful testimony of Christ as Savior, as Redeemer, as Atoning Lamb of God? Because doing so invites and becomes part of the divine power of testimony borne by God the Father and by the Holy Ghost, a testimony borne on wings of fire to the very hearts of investigators. Such a divine testimony of Christ is the rock upon which every new convert must build. Only this testimony of the atoning Anointed, Victorious One will

King Benjamin taught: “The Lord Omnipotent . . . shall come down from heaven among the children of men. . . . And lo, he shall suffer temptations, and pain of body, hunger, thirst, and fatigue, even more than man can suffer, except it be unto death” (Mosiah 3:5, 7).



DETAIL FROM KING BENJAMIN PREACHES TO THE NEPHITES, BY GARY L. KAPP

prevail against the gates of hell. So saith the Son of God Himself.

Study the scriptures conscientiously and become familiar with those passages that teach and testify of Christ's redeeming mission. Nothing will so touch your heart and stir your soul like the truths of which I have been speaking.

I would particularly ask full-time and member missionaries to study from and teach the Atonement of Christ out of the Book of Mormon. I say that in a very biased way, because it was on my own mission that I came to love the Book of Mormon and the majesty of the Son of God which is revealed there. In its unparalleled focus on the messianic message of the Savior of the world, the Book of Mormon is literally a new testament or (to avoid confusion) "another testament" of Jesus Christ. As such the book centers upon that which scriptural testaments have always centered upon since the days of Adam and Eve: the declaration to all that through the Atonement of the Son of God, "as thou hast fallen thou mayest be redeemed, and all mankind, even as many as will."¹⁰

TESTIMONIES OF BOOK OF MORMON PROPHETS

There is not enough space here to convey the wonder and breadth of these Book of Mormon sermons, but consider this from Nephi early in his ministry:

"And the world, because of their iniquity, shall judge him to be a thing of naught; wherefore they scourge him, and he suffereth it; and they smite him, and he suffereth it. Yea, they spit upon him, and he suffereth it, because of his loving kindness and his long-suffering towards the children of men.

"And the God of our fathers, . . . yea, the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, yieldeth himself . . . as a man, into the hands of wicked men, to be lifted up, according to the words of Zenock, and to be crucified, according to the words of Neum, and to be buried in a sepulchre, according to the words of Zenas. . . .

"And all these things must surely come, saith the prophet Zenas. And the rocks of the earth must rend; and because of the groanings of the earth, many of the kings of the isles of the sea shall be wrought upon by the Spirit of God, to exclaim: The God of nature suffers."¹¹

Or this from Nephi at the end of his life:

"And now, my beloved brethren, after ye have gotten into this strait and narrow path, I would ask if all is done? Behold, I say unto you, Nay; for ye have not

come thus far save it were by the word of Christ with unshaken faith in him, relying wholly upon the merits of him who is mighty to save.

"Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life.

"And now, behold, my beloved brethren, this is the way; . . . this is the doctrine of Christ, and the only and true doctrine of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."¹²

Or this from Nephi's remarkable brother Jacob, who gave a *two-day* sermon on the Fall and the Atonement!

"I know . . . that in the body he shall show himself unto those at Jerusalem, . . . for it behooveth the great Creator that he suffereth himself to become subject unto man in the flesh, and die for all men, that all men might become subject unto him.

"For as death hath passed upon all men, to fulfil the merciful plan of the great Creator, there must needs be a power of resurrection, and the resurrection must needs come unto man by reason of the fall; and the fall came by reason of transgression; and because man became fallen they were cut off from the presence of the Lord.

"Wherefore, it must needs be an infinite atonement. . . .

"O how great the goodness of our God, who prepareth a way for our escape from the grasp of this awful monster; yea, that monster, death and hell, which I call the death of the body, and also the death of the spirit. . . .

"And he cometh into the world that he may save all men if they will hearken unto his voice; for behold, he suffereth the pains of all men, yea, the pains of every living creature, both men, women, and children, who belong to the family of Adam.

"And he suffereth this that the resurrection might pass upon all men. . . .

"And he commandeth all men that they must repent, and be baptized in his name, having perfect faith in the Holy One of Israel, or they cannot be saved in the kingdom of God."¹³

Consider this from King Benjamin:

"For behold, the time cometh, and is not far distant, that with power, the Lord Omnipotent . . . shall come down from heaven among the children of men, and shall dwell in a tabernacle of clay, and shall go forth amongst men, working mighty miracles, such as healing the sick, raising the dead, causing the lame to walk, the blind to receive their sight, and the deaf to hear, and curing all manner of diseases.



The Book of Mormon was the first—and is still the greatest—missionary tract of this dispensation.

“And he shall cast out devils, or the evil spirits which dwell in the hearts of the children of men.

“And lo, he shall suffer temptations, and pain of body, hunger, thirst, and fatigue, even more than man can suffer, except it be unto death; for behold, blood cometh from every pore, so great shall be his anguish for the wickedness and the abominations of his people. . . .

“ . . . And even after all this they shall consider him a man, and say that he hath a devil, and shall scourge him, and shall crucify him.

“And he shall rise the third day from the dead. . . .

“ . . . His blood atoneth for the sins of those who have fallen by the transgression of Adam, who have died not knowing the will of God concerning them, or who have ignorantly sinned.”¹⁴

Or, as a last example, this from the great patriarch Lehi:

“Wherefore, redemption cometh in and through the Holy Messiah. . . .

“Behold, he offereth himself a sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the law, unto all those who have a broken heart and a contrite spirit; and unto none else can the ends of the law be answered.

“Wherefore, *how great the importance to make these things known unto the inhabitants of the earth, that they may know that there is no flesh that can dwell in the presence of God, save it be through the merits, and mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah, who layeth down his life according to the flesh, and taketh it again by the power of the Spirit, that he may bring to pass the resurrection of the dead, being the first that should rise.*

“Wherefore, he is the firstfruits unto God, inasmuch as he shall make intercession for all the children of men; and they that believe in him shall be saved.”¹⁵

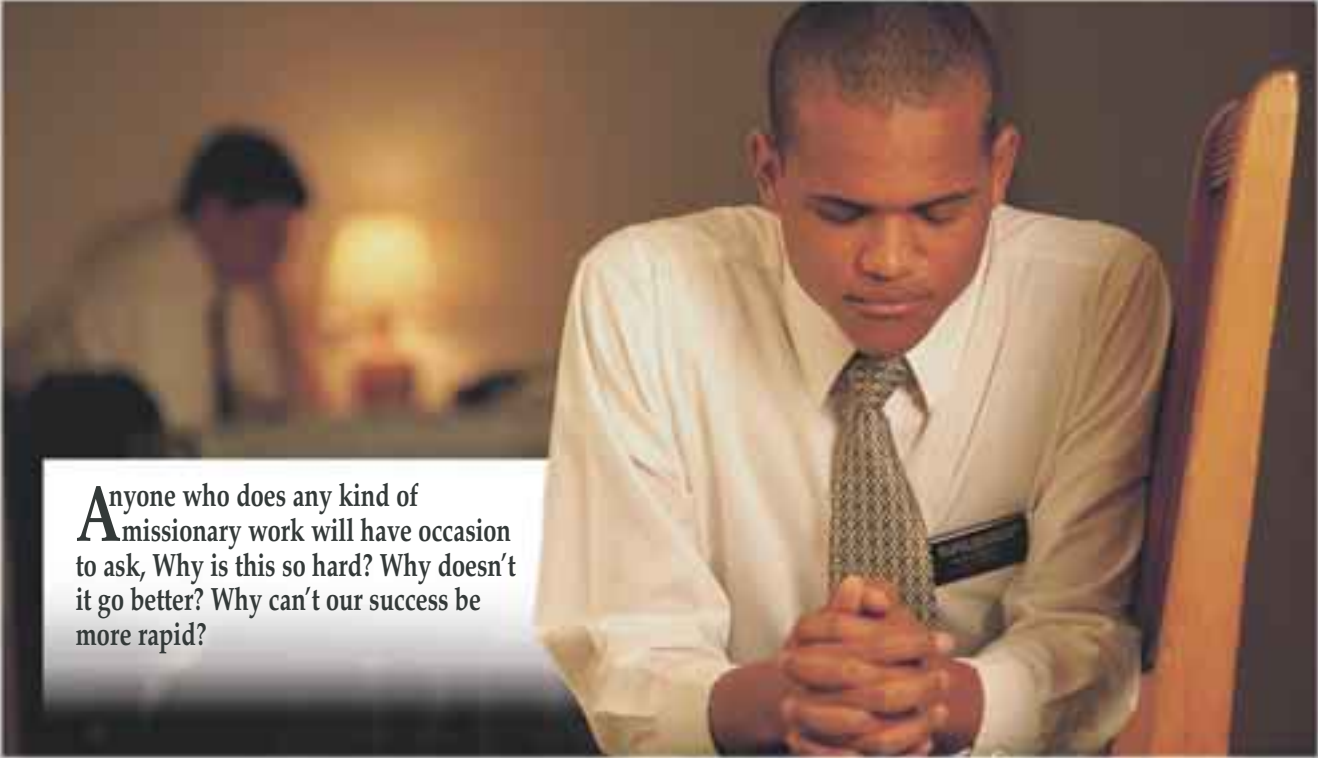
Obviously, you recognize that these samples are testimonies from just the first pages of the Book of Mormon. Perhaps this is enough to give you a feel for the urgent, impressive theme that runs all through that sacred record. With its declared title-page purpose of testifying that Jesus is the Christ, little wonder that the Book of Mormon was the first—and is still the greatest—missionary tract of this dispensation. As Lehi says to me and to you, “How great the importance to make these things [of the Atonement] known unto the inhabitants of the earth.”

I testify to you that we will change lives, including our own, if we will teach the Atonement through the Book of Mormon as well as, of course, from all of the other scriptures.

THE ATONEMENT AND THE MISSIONARY

Almost everything I have said here has been an aid directed toward the missionary process, ultimately toward the investigator. May I close with an extended testimony about how focusing on the Atonement helps full-time and member missionaries and mission leaders.

Anyone who does any kind of missionary work will have occasion to ask, Why is this so hard? Why doesn't it go better? Why can't our success be more rapid? Why aren't there more people joining the Church? It is the truth. We believe in angels. We trust



An anyone who does any kind of missionary work will have occasion to ask, Why is this so hard? Why doesn't it go better? Why can't our success be more rapid?

in miracles. Why don't people just flock to the font? Why isn't the only risk in missionary work that of pneumonia from being soaking wet all day and all night in the baptismal font?

You will have occasion to ask those questions. I have thought about this a great deal. I offer this as my personal feeling. I am convinced that missionary work is not easy because *salvation is not a cheap experience*. Salvation *never* was easy. We are The Church of Jesus Christ, this is the truth, and He is our Great Eternal Head. How could we believe it would be easy for us when it was never, ever easy for Him? It seems to me that missionaries and mission leaders have to spend at least a few moments in Gethsemane. Missionaries and mission leaders have to take at least a step or two toward the summit of Calvary.

Now, please don't misunderstand. I'm not talking about anything anywhere near what Christ experienced. That would be presumptuous and sacrilegious. But I believe that missionaries *and* investigators, to come to the truth, to come to salvation, to know something of this price that has been paid, will have to pay a token of that same price.

For that reason I don't believe missionary work has ever been easy, nor that conversion is, nor that retention is, nor that continued faithfulness is. I believe it is supposed to require some effort, something from the depths of our soul.

If He could come forward in the night, kneel down, fall on His face, bleed from every pore, and cry, "Abba, Father (Papa), if this cup can pass, let it pass,"¹⁶ then little wonder that salvation is not a whimsical or easy thing for us. If you wonder if there isn't an easier way, you should remember you are not the first one to ask that. Someone a lot greater and a lot grander asked a long time ago if there wasn't an easier way.

The Atonement will carry the missionaries perhaps even more importantly than it will carry the investigators. When you struggle, when you are rejected, when you are spit upon and cast out and made a hiss and a byword, you are standing with the best life this world has ever known, the only pure and perfect life ever lived. You have reason to stand tall and be grateful that the Living Son of the Living God knows all about your sorrows and afflictions. The only way to salvation is through Gethsemane and on to Calvary. The only way to eternity is through Him—the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

I testify that the living God is our Eternal Father and that Jesus Christ is His living and Only Begotten Son in the flesh. I testify that this Jesus, who was slain and hanged on a tree,¹⁷ was the chief Apostle then and is the chief Apostle now, the Great High Priest,

the chief cornerstone of His Church in this last and greatest of all dispensations. I testify that He lives, that the whole triumph of the gospel is that He lives, and because He does, so will we.

On that first Resurrection Sunday, Mary Magdalene first thought she saw a gardener. Well, she did—the Gardener who cultivated Eden and who endured Gethsemane. The Gardener who gave us the rose of Sharon, the lily of the valley, the cedars of Lebanon, the tree of life.

I declare Him to be the Savior of the world, the Bishop and Shepherd of our souls, the Bright and Morning Star. I know that our garments can be washed white only in the blood of that Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world. I know that we are lifted up unto life because He was lifted up unto death, that He bore our griefs and carried our sorrows, and with His stripes we are healed. I bear witness that He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, that He was a man of sorrows acquainted with grief because upon Him were laid the transgressions of us all.¹⁸

I bear witness that He came from God as a God to bind up the broken-hearted, to dry the tears from every eye, to proclaim liberty to the captive and open the prison doors to them that are bound.¹⁹ I promise that because of your faithful response to the call to spread the gospel, He will bind up *your* broken hearts, dry *your* tears, and set *you* and your families free. That is my missionary promise to you and

your missionary message to the world. □

From a talk given at the Provo (Utah) Missionary Training Center on 20 June 2000.

Gospel topics: missionary work, Atonement, Jesus Christ, Book of Mormon, faith, repentance, baptism

NOTES

1. See *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith (1976), 121.
2. Mosiah 3:17; compare Acts 4:12.
3. John 14:6.
4. 1 Cor. 1:18, 22–23; emphasis added.
5. Luke 2:9–11; emphasis added.
6. A of F 1:4; emphasis added.
7. Rev. 12:10–11; emphasis added.
8. 1 Cor. 2:2.
9. 3 Ne. 11:27, 32, 35–36, 39; emphasis added.
10. Moses 5:9.
11. 1 Ne. 19:9–10, 12.
12. 2 Ne. 31:19–21.
13. 2 Ne. 9:5–7, 10, 21–23.
14. Mosiah 3:5–7, 9–11.
15. 2 Ne. 2:6–9; emphasis added.
16. See Mark 14:36.
17. See Acts 5:30.
18. See Isa. 53; Mosiah 14.
19. See Isa. 61:1–3.



We will change lives, including our own, if we will teach the Atonement through the Book of Mormon.

The Principle of PRESIDENCY

When presidencies in the Church function effectively, we see the fruition of the Lord's counsel to "organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing" (D&C 88:119).

By ELDER JOE J. CHRISTENSEN
Emeritus Member of the
First Quorum of the Seventy



In the scriptures we read the counsel to "organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing; and establish . . . a house of order, a house of God" (D&C 88:119).

One thing is sure: this is a Church organized with every needful thing. In fact, I know of no more effective organization. Under the direction of the First Presidency and all other presidencies, we really are organized, and a house of order has been established. As members, we know where we fit into the organization, and as a result of our testimonies and commitment to the gospel, we are responsive when calls come to serve in a multitude of ways.

I smiled when I heard that some grateful woman who was involved with the cleanup efforts after a devastating tornado in Oklahoma had said, "We appreciate the help we received from so many, especially from two churches: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Mormon Church."

When leaders feel they should make decisions unilaterally without discussing matters with their counselors, they are like a one-legged stool. They miss the strength and stability of the principle of presidency.

Also, when flooding occurred a few years ago in the environs of Atlanta, Georgia, the Area President called a stake president and asked if he could please arrange to have 100 men available for one of the cleanup projects. The stake president responded, "No, I don't think we could arrange for 100, but we can arrange to have 200 there!"—and 200 did respond.

It is a blessing to belong to a church that provides us as lay members the opportunity of service, and generally our members are responsive. Recently, there was a need for canvassing a neighborhood in connection with a political issue with moral overtones in which several churches and civic organizations were cooperating. A leader of one of the groups said, "I wish there were some way we could get our members to respond like your church is able to do."

We are blessed with a remarkable organization within the Church. The concept of lay leadership, which involves all of us as active members, provides us with many opportunities to serve and develop. Generally we serve in or under the direction of a presidency



Fewer mistakes
are made when
a leader counsels
effectively with his
or her counselors.



of a quorum or auxiliary organization.

Not long ago, in a chapel filled with adult members of the Church, I asked, “How many of you are now serving, or ever have served, in the leadership of an organization where there was an executive along with counselors—in other words, in a presidency?” Almost every hand in the audience went up. Serving in a leadership position in a presidency at one time or another is an experience that many share as active members of the Church.

There must be a special significance about the concept of presidency, the idea of an administrator with two counselors and the number three. In the Godhead there are three personages. There are three in the First Presidency, the Area Presidency, the stake presidency, the bishopric, the leadership of the priesthood quorums, and the presidencies of the auxiliaries. There is something consistent and compelling about the idea that an executive in whatever organization in the Church has two counselors. There seems to be an underlying principle of presidency.

When we are called to serve in the presidency of any organization as the president or as a counselor, we all would like to be successful. In reality, some presidencies are much more effective than others. What does it take to ensure that things go well in a presidency?

Here are a few practical suggestions that can help achieve success:

Take advantage of the principle of presidency by counseling with your counselors. When presidents or administrators feel they are the ones to make the decisions unilaterally without discussing matters with their counselors, they are on shaky ground and also miss the strength and stability inherent

in the principle of presidency.

If we are not careful, we can fall into the difficulty described in this scripture: “We have learned by sad experience that it is the nature and disposition of almost all men [and I would add, at least a few women], as soon as they get a little authority, as they suppose, they will immediately begin to exercise unrighteous [or unwise or heavy-handed] dominion” (D&C 121:39).


One counselor who was serving with a president who operated in a unilateral and domineering way said: “If this were not the Church, I would resign. We do not function as a presidency. The president makes all of the decisions. We don’t meet and counsel together regularly. As counselors, we are more like errand boys and are just expected to do as we are told. It is sort of like he feels his directions come from on high. He makes all the decisions that are of any consequence and sometimes rolls over the people in the organization. He doesn’t delegate well and really doesn’t

need us as counselors. As I said, if this were not the Church, I would have resigned a long time ago.”

In a training session, to demonstrate the instability of such a presidency, I have invited someone to come to the stand and construct a one-legged stool. I have a little round wooden top with a hole partially bored in the center into which a little leg can be inserted. The individual easily inserts the leg into the central hole, and in seconds a one-legged stool is ready to demonstrate. As I balance it on the side of the pulpit where it can be seen, I ask the audience to comment about the nature of the design. Immediately they mention that the structure is unstable. The slightest touch makes it unbalanced, and it falls over.

Then I ask the individual to remove the one leg and with the two others make a three-legged stool by inserting the legs in three holes located around the outside edge of the top. Quickly a three-legged stool is ready for demonstration. Its structure is solid. It can bear weight and does not readily topple to one side. With three legs there is steadiness, while with just one there is great instability.

We should remember that there is safety and stability in capitalizing on the positive principles of presidency. Fewer mistakes are made when a leader counsels effectively with his or her counselors. Most



With just one or two legs there is great instability, while with three legs there is steadiness.

problems can be solved through thoughtful counsel in a presidency.

Some time ago a stake president called the member of the Seventy in Church headquarters who was serving as the Area President and asked him for help in solving an unusual problem.

After hearing the question, the Area President asked: "President, that is a difficult question. Have you discussed it with your counselors?"

"No, not yet. The problem just came up, and I thought I would call you and get some counsel," the stake president explained.

The Area President responded: "President, I have a suggestion. Talk this over with your counselors, and if you don't come to a solution you can all feel good about, give me a call and we will try to be as helpful as we can."

The stake president didn't call back, because as a presidency in counsel they had undoubtedly found a solution they could feel good about. There are few problems that cannot be solved by three faithful individuals in open and thoughtful counsel.

When members utilize the principle of presidency, counsel together, and seek the Spirit, few mistakes are made. The same Spirit that guides to all truth (see John 16:13) will confirm the correctness of decisions made in the safety of counsel, whether at the local or general levels of the Church. Remember, the scriptures indicate that in counsel there is safety (see Prov. 11:14).

The decisions made in a presidency should be made in counsel and, with very few exceptions, have the blessing of being unanimous. We would do well to follow the principle taught in scripture regarding the importance of unanimity as it relates to some of the presiding quorums of the Church:

"Every decision made . . . must be by the unanimous voice of the same; that is, every member . . . must [agree] to its decisions, in order to make their decisions of the same power or validity

one with the other" (D&C 107:27).

We could paraphrase this counsel by saying that decisions made by a presidency should ideally be by the unanimous voice of the same; that is, every member of the presidency should agree to its decisions, in order to make their decisions of the same power or validity one with the other. Unanimous decisions made in counsel as a presidency have much more strength than those made by the president acting alone.

Never should the president and one of the counselors become the "presidency" to the exclusion of the other counselor.

In one Relief Society presidency, the president recommended that one of her closest friends serve as her first counselor. They had associated together for years, and when they began to serve in the presidency it soon became apparent to the second counselor that the president and her friend had discussed most of the issues and agreed on the decision before they met as a presidency. She said, "I felt like an outsider, the odd one out," when it came to that assignment.

In this case, the president and the first counselor missed the input the second counselor could have added, which would have contributed much strength to the decisions made. It is important to remember that only two do not constitute the intention of a functioning and successful presidency. Imagine a two-legged stool.

A presidency should be decisive. Some presidencies make the mistake of procrastinating decision making. With such situations, matters are put off rather than "wrestling them to the ground" and getting decisions made. Presidencies can be greatly helped by having an effective secretary who, in counsel with the presidency, forms an agenda with the items listed concisely. Then in the meeting the secretary records the decisions made, the assignments given, and who is assigned to provide effective follow-up. This approach can make for a smooth and efficient operation.



Avoid "interminable" meetings through better time management: set a reasonable time limit, focus on important issues, be decisive, and record the solutions.

Avoid “interminable” meetings through better time management. Everyone’s time is valuable. In one stake, complaints arose that presidency meetings were held too often and too long, so the newly called stake presidency decided they would do all they could to use their meeting time more efficiently. First, they determined they should set a definite and reasonable outside time limit on their weekly presidency meetings. They decided meetings should not be longer than one and a half or, at most, two hours. They determined each meeting would have an agenda that would contain only the items that all of the presidency needed to discuss. Whenever possible, issues raised by a member of the presidency would be accompanied by a recommended solution for consideration and thus help focus the discussion more efficiently.

They eliminated the practice of taking time to read the minutes of the previous meeting. The president said, “Minutes are not minutes; they are hours!” The executive secretary saw to it that a copy of the minutes of the previous meeting were distributed in advance. As a result, in meetings, the presidency dealt only with the most pressing matters and with follow-up on assignments previously made. Any items not considered in the set time frame were postponed until the next meeting. Longer meetings became rare exceptions and were much more appreciated by all. Also, no one complained when a meeting ended earlier than the established time limit.

Such an approach helped ensure that more of the valuable resource of time was available for family and other work or Church responsibilities.

Develop a feeling of fellowship within the presidency. Presidencies work better if they can develop some friendship and sociality among themselves. Occasional informal gatherings that include all members of the presidency along with their spouses can


contribute much to building a unity and team spirit. The antithesis of this is when the president chooses to associate socially with one of the counselors and excludes the other. Remember, the Lord said, “Be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine” (D&C 38:27). It could be a potluck dinner at one of the homes or a temple session followed by a visit to an ice cream parlor or whatever. Such gatherings as a group can be especially helpful in letting the spouses become personally acquainted with those with whom one serves and meets so regularly. Many find that some of their lifelong friends are among those with whom they have served in a presidency.

Divide the work into shared areas of responsibility. As you delegate, remember one caution: Although “first contact” assignments can logically be made within a presidency, division or delegation of responsibilities should not be independently handled by each individual so the rest of the presidency does not feel informed about what is going on. Each

member of the presidency needs to sense a responsibility for the whole.

Don’t be sad when the time comes for your release from the presidency. We should all remember the sound counsel I heard years ago from President Ezra Taft Benson. He mentioned that when it comes to callings in this Church, we should be aware of three things: First, we do not seek for a position. Second, we do not ask for a release. And, third, we are not sad when we are released.

Although most adjust well to being released, some find the adjustment difficult. It is well to remember from the beginning of our service that with each calling there is a built-in release date at some time in the future. One who has served as a



Unanimous decisions made in counsel as a presidency have much more strength.

president or counselor may be called to serve in a nonexecutive position in the same organization or just continue as a regular supportive member. Unfortunately, some do not make the adjustment when they are released, and whenever this happens it becomes a challenge to the individual as well as to the organization as a whole.

One of the impressive examples to me of how a real leader can be a good follower was shown to me by Brother William E. Berrett almost 30 years ago.

President Harold B. Lee of the First Presidency had called and asked that I return from a mission president assignment in Mexico City to serve as associate commissioner of education to Brother Neal A. Maxwell, who had been recently called as the commissioner of the Church Educational System. Included in my specific assignments was that of serving as the administrator of the Church's seminaries and institutes of religion. I felt humbled and overwhelmed with the assignment. Brother Berrett had served with distinction as the administrator of seminaries and institutes for many years. He was then at retirement age.

I had been in the office of this venerable and highly respected leader many times to receive counsel and assignments when I served as the director of various institutes.

Whenever I had need to meet with Brother Berrett, he would always graciously welcome me into his office. I would sit in a chair across from his large desk, and he would sit in his high-backed leather chair.

The announcement of my appointment to succeed him as the administrator of the seminaries and institutes had been made public. I drove to Provo, and as I had done so many times before, I climbed the steps to the third floor of the Smoot Administration Building on the BYU campus, where the administrative offices of the Church Educational System were located. The secretary arranged for me to meet with Brother Berrett. But this time, the situation was very different.



Develop a feeling of fellowship. Never should the president and one of the counselors become the "presidency" to the exclusion of the other counselor.

I will long remember entering the office. I went to sit where I had always sat across the desk from Brother Berrett. This great leader would have nothing to do with that arrangement. He rose from his seat and motioned for me to sit in his chair. I resisted. I wanted and intended to sit where I had always sat when meeting with him. After much insistence, I moved around the desk and sat uncomfortably in his chair. He sat across the desk where I had usually sat. His long-remembered words were: "Joe, long before I was asked to be a leader, I learned to follow. Now what can I do to be of help to you in any way?"

I decided then that whenever I was to be released from any calling, I would want to be as gracious and supportive of my successor as he was to me on that occasion.

Obviously, more could be written. However, in summary, if we really want to succeed while serving in a presidency, we should remember at least these suggestions:

- Take advantage of the principle of presidency by counseling with your counselors.
- Never should the president and one of the counselors be-

come the "presidency" to the exclusion of the other counselor.

- A presidency should be decisive.
- Avoid "interminable" meetings through better time management.
- Develop a feeling of fellowship within the presidency.
- Divide the work into shared areas of responsibility, remembering the caution that each member of the presidency needs to sense a responsibility for the whole.
- Don't be sad when the time comes for release from the presidency.

When presidencies in the Church function effectively, we see the fruition of the Lord's counsel to "organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing; and establish . . . a house of order, a house of God" (D&C 88:119). □

Gospel topics: presidency, leadership, unity

Don't Let Negativism Ruin Your Marriage

BY TERRY BAKER

When you see only the negative things about your spouse, the marriage is on a downward spiral. Yet you can change that direction by changing your perspective.

In temple sealing rooms, mirrors on opposite walls allow couples to gaze at their repeated image, which seems to go on endlessly. The reflection moves farther and farther away until it is almost as though they are being projected into another time and place. The symbolism is unmistakable—their union is supposed to last for eternity.

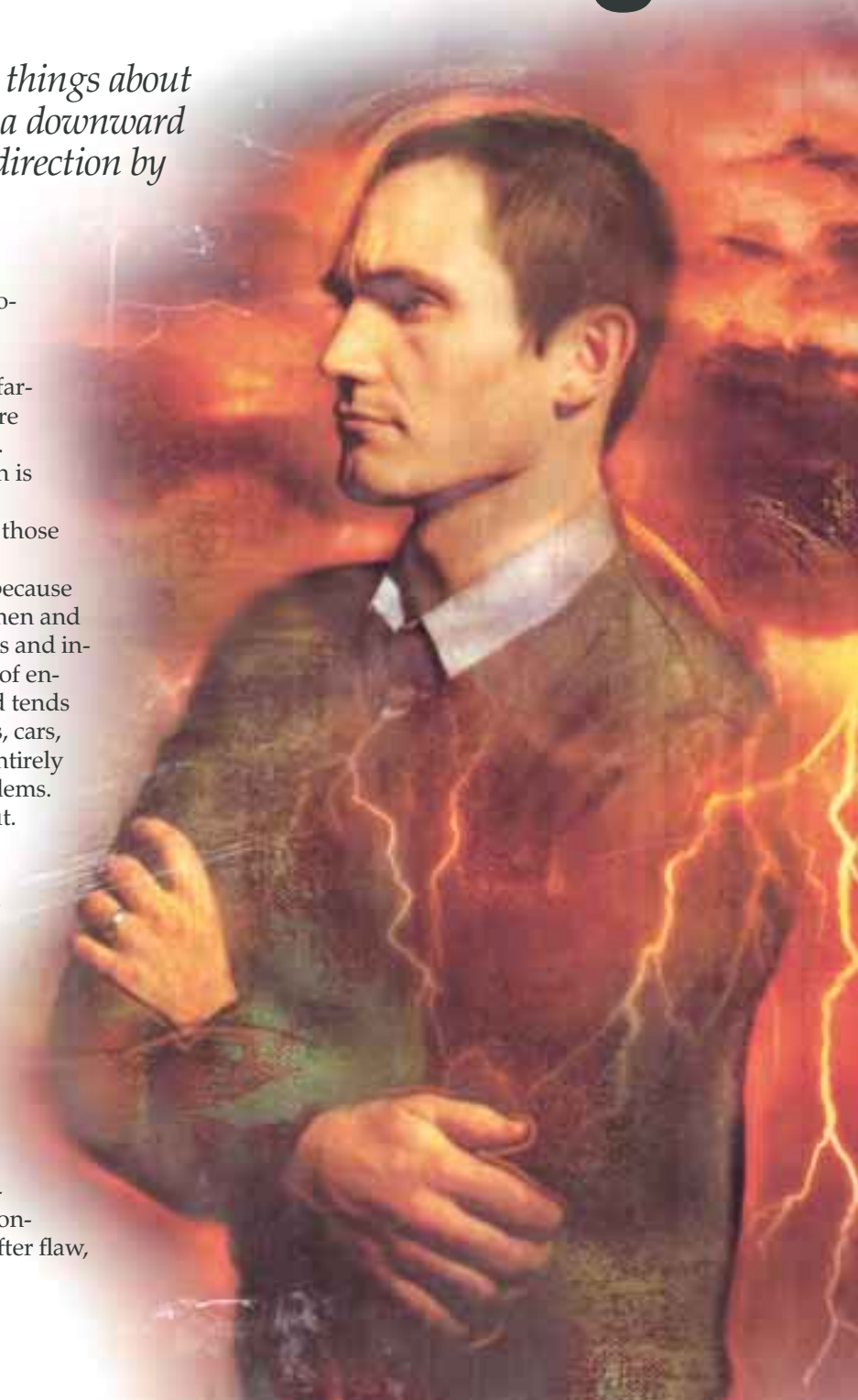
Few newlyweds understand how fragile those seemingly endless images can be.

Of course, all marriages have challenges because of normal differences between men and women and because of the couple's differing backgrounds and interests. Marriages can also be fragile because of entropy, meaning that anything left unattended tends to fall into a state of disorder. Lawns, gardens, cars, and children are examples; just leave them entirely to themselves and they quickly become problems. It takes effort and work to keep the weeds out. Marriage is no different.

While there are many challenges to marriages, this article focuses on only one—the negativity cycle.

CAUGHT IN THE CYCLE

Once in a counseling setting, I listened as a young woman—we'll call her April—complained about her husband. She had arrived at a point where she could not remember anything that was ever good about the relationship or about him. I was astonished at how she could continue nearly non-stop for more than an hour describing flaw after flaw,



disappointment after disappointment, hardly stopping to catch her breath.

It was obvious she had become obsessed with the beams she perceived in her husband's eye (see Matt. 7:3). Every waking moment of the day and even during her dreams at night, she was filled with disapproving thoughts about her husband's conduct. She had developed completely negative expectations of him, and she interpreted everything he did as fulfilling them. The marriage was in serious trouble.

How can a marriage that begins with much hope and love fall so low after just a few years? It doesn't happen overnight.

It is often the result of neglect, which

allows entropy into the home, and a lack of mutual respect, which breeds unwillingness to overlook each other's weaknesses and faults.

Let's examine, step by step, how April and her husband, "Tom," arrived at this awful state and then see how they saved their marriage.

THE POSITIVE-NEGATIVE BALANCE

The first discernible change in April and Tom's marriage was a drop in positive communication. Researchers have noted that healthy relationships need a five-to-one ratio of positive-to-negative communication to survive.¹ This positive communication can be anything from a wink or a hug to a rose or a "You look great."

Nearly all marriages start with a positive ratio. In the early stages of courtship, where love is often blind, the ratio can be 1,200 positives to 0 negatives. Some call this the "illusion stage." Sooner or later, married couples start to see things they hadn't noticed before. They wake up and realize, "My spouse is not acting at all as I expected!" They have entered the "disillusionment stage," where reality confronts blind love head on.

This disillusionment stage crept up on April over a period of years until her private negative thoughts about Tom canceled out all his good qualities. It was as though she were wearing blinders that blocked out most of the good things Tom did and allowed her to see only what she didn't like.

April continued along the negativity cycle by complaining about what she didn't like. Complaints are not necessarily bad; for many couples, expressing concerns can help clear the air if communicated kindly. But Tom made a serious mistake at this point that ensured the downward spiral would continue. Rather than listen nondefensively to his wife's concerns about their differences, he chose to downplay their importance and did little to change or compromise. He let entropy set in by neglecting his responsibility.

King Benjamin warned about this kind of reaction to sincere expressions of concern: "My brethren, . . . I have not commanded you to come up hither to trifle with the words which I shall speak, but that you should hearken unto me, and open your ears that ye may hear, and your hearts that ye may understand" (Mosiah 2:9). Just as King Benjamin felt he deserved the undivided

All marriages have challenges because of normal differences between men and women and their individual backgrounds and interests. There is also the entropy factor: anything left unattended tends to fall into a state of disorder.



attention of his people, husbands and wives deserve to be taken seriously when they have a complaint or a concern to express. No one deserves to be trifled with when speaking from the heart to a loved one.

ESCALATION OF THE PROBLEM

As can be the case, when April's complaints were trifled with, she chose to exaggerate them, trying to get Tom to react and deal with the problem. This brought into the marriage what researcher John Gottman refers to as the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse.² Chapter 6 of Revelation speaks of four horsemen tied to judgments that will come upon the world, and thus these horsemen have become associated with destruction. The four mentioned here will certainly bring destruction to a marriage if they go unchecked.


The first horseman is *criticism*. When we criticize others, we attack their personality or character, usually with blame, rather than a specific behavior. April

voiced a variety of criticisms: "Tom, you obviously just don't care!" "You should get up for family prayer and be more energetic." "You should start putting the family first." "You should. . ."

Tom again made a serious mistake. Rather than consider what might be the reasons for April's comments, he still did nothing to change his behavior. Doing nothing is easy, involves no sacrifice—and feeds entropy in the marriage.

This continued trifling with his wife's expressions of frustration led to April's next mistake. She invited the second horseman, *contempt*, into their home. April was soon saying things like, "Tom, you're a failure as a husband and father!" or "I had to call the plumber again today because you are so lazy!" The result was darkness. "And that which doth not edify is not of God, and is darkness" (D&C 50:23).

At this point Tom had two choices. The first was to try finally to understand his wife's



Verbalize compliments often to keep the constructive communication ratio high.

frustrations and respond nondefensively as Lehi did when Sariah “complained against” him (1 Ne. 5:2). Lehi respected his wife’s expression of frustration with their precarious situation in the wilderness and comforted her. In order to follow Lehi’s example, Tom would have needed to pause and consider April’s accusations. He might have said to himself, “I must have watched way too much basketball (golf, soccer, etc.) on TV Saturday to upset her this much” or “She’s right; I have been neglecting her. I don’t blame her for feeling like this.”

When we choose, as Lehi did, to control “natural man” thoughts and respond kindly, we invite the Holy Ghost into the home. Respect, empathy, and patience give the Spirit a chance to soften our hearts and lead us both to repent. This can set off the chain reaction described in Doctrine and Covenants 50:24: “That which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day.”

Tom’s other choice for responding to his wife’s concerns was straight from the natural man handbook, the sort of action that can put us carelessly in opposition to God’s will (see Mosiah 3:19). He ignored his wife’s frustration yet again. Choosing this option allowed Tom’s pride to make him dwell on negative thoughts about his accuser: “What’s her problem? Why can’t she just leave me alone?”

These types of reactions lead to the third horseman—*defensiveness*. At this stage, we refuse to acknowledge our part in the problem. We deny responsibility and make excuses and counteraccusations instead of listening to our spouse’s concerns. We stubbornly pass all responsibility for fixing the problem back to our spouse.

Defensiveness often escalates to the point where the fourth horseman—*stonewalling*—enters the picture. To stonewall is to simply walk away from the problem and cut off all interaction that leads to a solution. A problem in a marriage may never be resolvable when one spouse refuses to discuss it.

The consequences of allowing the four horsemen into a marriage can be devastating. The negativity cycle has a predictable train of events. When problems are not worked through, couples often become so upset that constructive discussion is not possible. They feel that talking the problems out is useless. Often they start to lead parallel lives in which they seldom spend any time with each other. All of this brings feelings of loneliness and rejection.

THERE IS BUT ONE WAY



“There is but one way that we can be united, and that way is

to seek the Lord and his righteousness. . . . Unity comes by following the light from above. It does not come out of the confusions below.”

**President Marion G. Romney (1897–1988),
First Counselor in the First Presidency,
“Unity,” Ensign, May 1983, 17.**

The final stage before breakup is for the couple to start rewriting their history: they forget all the good times and rewrite the past in light of their present feelings.

This is where we began with April and Tom. Here is how they overcame their problem.

BREAKING THE NEGATIVITY CYCLE

Often it is a couple’s inability to allow the Atonement to operate in their relationship that causes the negativity cycle to continue until it devours the marriage. They refuse to allow the Atonement to take effect in their own lives and in the life of the one they loved.

Ideally, when we do something that irritates or hurts our spouse, the “at-one-ment” makes it possible for us to regain lost trust and unity in two ways. First, the Atonement allows us to gain forgiveness from God, thereby restoring our own feelings of self-worth. Second, the Atonement encourages our spouse to forgive us and cast aside negative thoughts. In fact, the scriptures tell us we are required to forgive one another (see D&C 64:9–11).

When a spouse goes through the repentance process provided through the Atonement, we are to follow the example of the Lord in His attitude toward that person: “Behold, he who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more” (D&C 58:42). Sometimes our inability to forgive and forget perpetuates the negativity cycle. Refusing to forgive others separates us spiritually from the Savior and destroys relationships.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF-DISCIPLINE

To apply the Atonement in marriage, we need to discipline our thoughts and control any natural tendency to be sharp-tongued or judgmental (see Ps. 39:1, Prov. 21:23, James 3:1–5). A good way to do this is to make a list of positive traits about your spouse and then commit it to memory. When you find yourself thinking negatively about your spouse, discipline yourself to remember the good times and the many wonderful traits that attracted you to him or her in the first place. Verbalize these compliments to your spouse often to keep the constructive communication ratio high. Consider keeping a journal of positive family experiences and feelings to draw upon when you’re tempted to rewrite your marital history in a negative light. If possible, keep a photo album of special occasions.

When you allow pride to lead you into the negativity cycle, it is like trying to swim while wearing a diver's weight belt: it takes all your energy just to keep your head above water. Let go of the pride, repent, and unstrap the weight belt of negative feelings and replace them with positive thoughts. Invite the Holy Spirit to heal and protect your union. Positive thoughts, aided by the Spirit, act like a life vest to help keep you afloat so you can use your energy to stay on course.

April and Tom used these techniques to redirect the course of their marriage.

COMMITMENT TO OVERCOME

Through commitment to covenants, we can overcome the marriage-destroying consequences of the negativity cycle. President Gordon B. Hinckley has counseled: "Every marriage is subject to occasional stormy weather. But with patience, mutual respect, and a spirit of forbearance, we can weather these storms. Where mistakes have been made, there can be apology, repentance, and forgiveness. But there must be willingness to do so on the part of both parties."³

Nearly a century and a half ago, President Brigham Young explained how true charity can help couples weather marital storms when clouds of negativity threaten. His counsel was addressed to women of the Church, but the principles he taught apply equally to husbands and wives:

"Were I a woman possessed of great powers of mind, filled with wisdom, and, upon the whole, a magnanimous woman, and had been privileged with my choice, and had married a man, . . . he not answering my expectations, and I being sorry that I had made such a choice, let me show my wisdom by not complaining about it. . . . By seeking to cast off her husband—by withdrawing her confidence and good will from him, she casts a

As one couple returned to the temple seeking help with their marriage, they vowed not to allow negativity and darkness into their home and to actively seek that light which could help them grow "brighter and brighter until the perfect day."

dark shade upon his path, when, by pursuing a proper course of love, obedience, and encouragement, he might attain to that perfection she had anticipated in him."⁴

The type of pure love and sacrifice suggested by President Young comes when both husband and wife are firmly committed to eternal covenants. This presupposes that there is no abuse in the marriage. As April and Tom returned to the temple seeking help with their marriage, they again realized how important their covenants with God and each other were. They vowed not to allow negativity and darkness into their home and to actively seek that light which could help them grow "brighter and brighter until the perfect day."

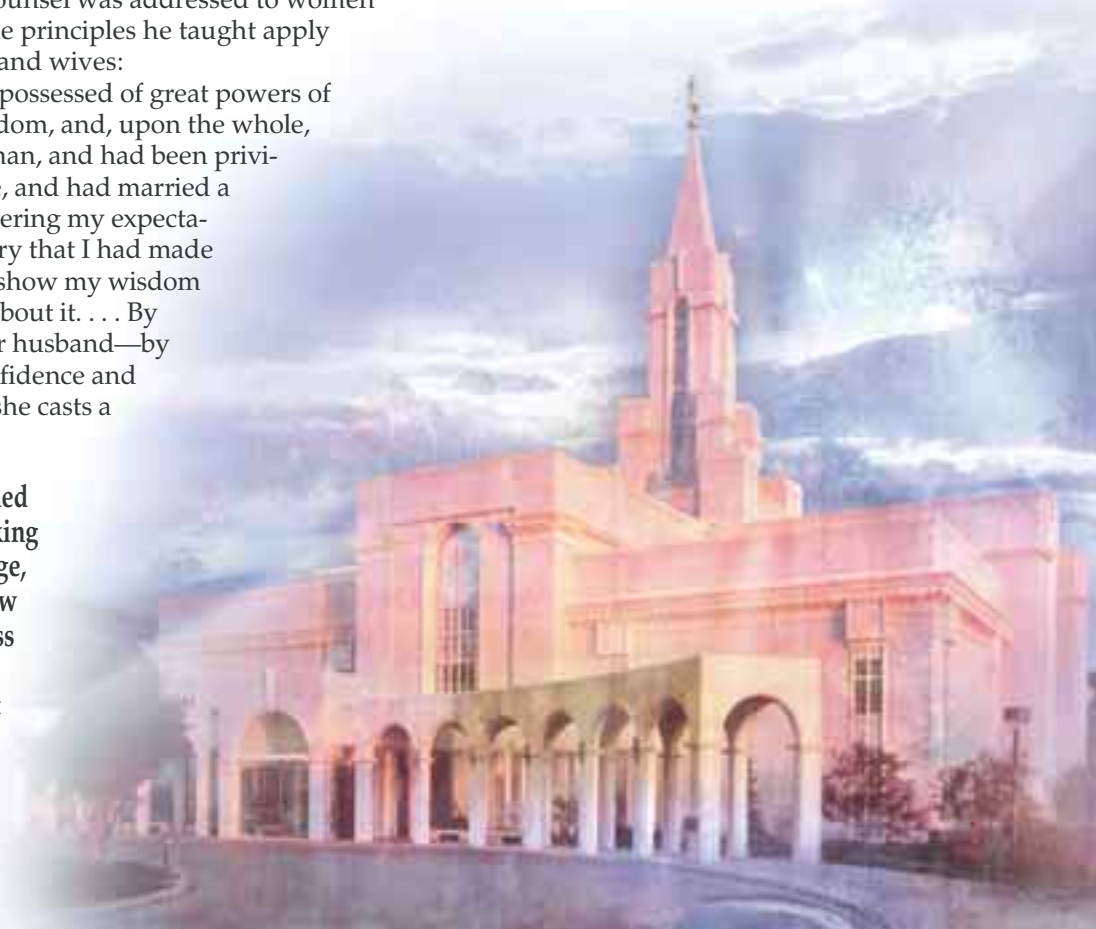
They found that breaking the negativity cycle freed them to build on the best they could be together rather than tearing each other down individually. They renewed the hope found in those seemingly endless images they had seen in the mirrors of the temple on their wedding day. □

Terry Baker is a member of the Wasatch Fifth Ward, Salt Lake Wasatch Stake.

Gospel topics: marriage, charity, forgiveness, love, compassion

NOTES

1. See John Gottman, *Why Marriages Succeed or Fail* (1994), 55–66.
2. See *Why Marriages Succeed or Fail*, 69–102.
3. "I Believe," *Ensign*, Aug. 1992, 5.
4. *Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe (1941), 202.



Things Learned as a Mother

Mothers share insights gained from experiences with their children.

As parents rear their children in love and righteousness ("The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102), they not only teach but also learn. In the following article, mothers relate some lessons on patience, love, and perspective they received while fulfilling parental responsibilities.

"LET PATIENCE HAVE HER PERFECT WORK" (JAMES 1:4)

One day my four-year-old daughter came into the kitchen with a handful of rose petals and laid them on the table. I could see she was frustrated and confused. "What's wrong?" I asked.

"I tried to make the flower come out of the rosebud, and it all fell apart!" she said.

I took her into my arms and explained about patience and allowing things to grow in their own way and time. "Those flowers will bloom when they are ready," I said. "Each day stop and just look at them. Slowly the roses will unfold and be beautiful."

Years later, when she was 11, I found myself impatiently trying to change her behavior. Our relationship

"I tried to make the flower come out of the rosebud," my daughter said, frustrated.



crumbled. I couldn't sleep at night from worry. *What's wrong?* I wondered. *Why does she act this way? How will she turn out?* Fortunately, I did some study of child development and discovered that my daughter was a normal 11-year-old. This time the lesson on patience was for me: love, be firm, but trust and let go. It wasn't easy, but our relationship improved. Before long I saw her becoming a confident young woman, and I felt joy.

Patience is one of the most difficult requirements of parenting, yet it is critical to our effectiveness. At a fundamental level, patience is trusting God and accepting His guidelines for handling the frustrations

and challenges of life. It may not be easy to patiently allow children the time they need to grow beyond their weaknesses and immaturity, but if we seek the Lord's guidance, there is much we can do through Christlike love to encourage and nurture that growth.

Accept. Acceptance is taking our children for what they are right now, without comparing them to others or wishing they didn't have their particular flaws. Acceptance is letting go of unrealistic or unfair expectations. It is understanding the seasons of our children's lives.

The Savior is our example of patient, accepting love. "We love him, because he first loved us" (1 Jn.

Sitting down with my children and *really* looking at them, I saw sparkling, happy spirits who needed someone to listen.



4:19). Feeling His perfect love, we accept Him and invite Him into our lives, and through Him we receive motivation, direction, and strength. So it is with our children. As we truly accept them, they are more likely to accept our role as parents to support, teach, set wise limits, and provide opportunities that can give them experience and growth.

Allow. We need to allow children to meet the individual challenges and storms of their lives. Making some mistakes and experiencing consequences is part of learning and growing.

In our deep concern we may not want to give our children opportunities to pursue endeavors in which they might fail. Yet having the freedom to make choices and to use their own talents and insights is the only way they can truly succeed.

Appreciate. Someone once quipped, "Nothing improves my hearing like praise!" Like spring showers on a newly planted garden, noticing our children's efforts and expressing appreciation nurtures growth.

Express gratitude for a job well done, and next time it may be done even better. Express admiration for a talent and watch it flourish. Patiently help a child discover and value the gifts God gave him or her to contribute to this earth, and in time those gifts may blossom.—Christy Williams, Somerset Ward, Renton Washington North Stake

"LOOK AT YOUR CHILDREN"

It seemed there just wasn't a spare second in my day. Besides attending to my responsibilities as a wife and mother and fulfilling Church callings,

I was involved in rehearsals for a major dramatic production. Nevertheless, I managed to get things done, and my children, familiar with this pattern, seemed content.

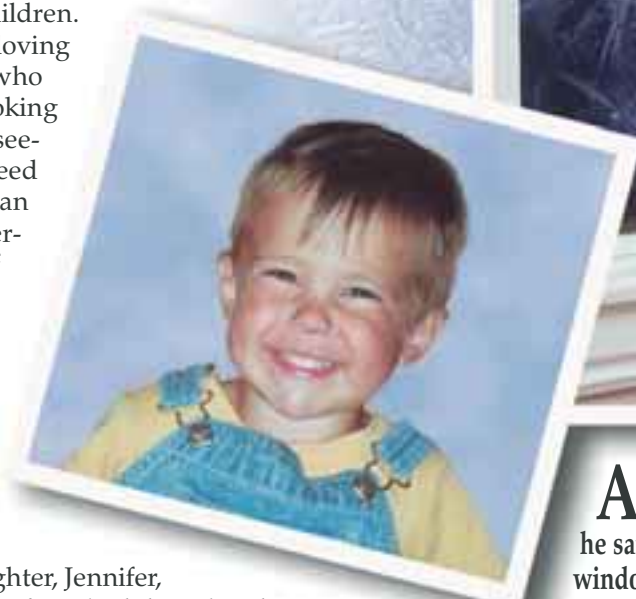
As I quickened my pace one day in order to complete remaining household tasks before heading for another rehearsal, the thought crossed my mind, *Look at your children*. I dismissed it because I had just talked with them and they were fine. The prompting came again. Now, wondering if this was more than my own thought, I did look in on my children. They were still all playing happily on the floor together. I continued my work, and in a few minutes it came again. *Really look . . . see.*

I went into the family room and sat on the couch, and the children scampered over to sit beside me and on my lap. I talked with them, and this time I looked into the eyes of each child. Now I saw more than little mortal bodies that needed clean clothes and a hot supper before their mother left. I saw sparkling, happy

spirits who needed to be listened to. Those few precious minutes to stop, to look, and to see made a big difference in my outlook. As my youngest threw his arms around me and said, "I love you too, Mommy," I saw very clearly that my dramatic role was insignificant compared to my divine role as a mother.

After that, whenever I found myself slipping into a rush mode, the memory of this experience would flash into my mind and help me focus on the deeper, eternal images and potential of my children.

I am grateful to a loving Heavenly Father who taught me that looking is not necessarily seeing and that we need to rely on more than just our eyes to perceive the worth of each soul.—**Kaye Powell, Manhattan First Ward, Salina Kansas Stake**



"I WANT DADDY!"

When my daughter, Jennifer, was two years old, after I had disciplined her or hurt her feelings in one way or another she would often cry, "I want Daddy!"

One day as she cried "I want Daddy!" over and over again, I explained to her that Daddy was at work. As she cried harder and harder for him, I became more frustrated and angry. Then, without prompting, she suddenly began to cry instead, "I want Mommy!"

I realized then that she had only wanted to be loved. I thought about how many times her cries for her daddy had really been cries for a more loving mommy. I took her into my arms and loved her, thankful for the lesson she had taught me that day.—**Trudy Roberts, Woodruff Third Ward, Idaho Falls Idaho Ammon West Stake**

ICE DOILIES

"Mom! I need you! Hurry!"

Adrian's frantic cry jolted me from my slumber. Heart pounding, I tumbled out of bed and dashed into his room.

"What's the matter?" I croaked in my just-awakened voice, not sure what I might find.

My three-year-old son stood on top of his toy box, looking out the window.



A network of ice doilies adorned the window pane in my son's room. "Look!" he said to me. "There's ice on the inside of the window. How did it get there?"

I repeated an octave higher, "Adrian, what's the matter?"

Adrian turned his shining brown eyes toward me. "Look! There's ice on the inside of the window. How did it get there?"

My first reaction was irritation. He had scared me. But before a reprimand could escape my lips, I too noticed the intricate swirls of frost decorating the glass. Shown in relief by the pale dawn, a network of ice doilies adorned the entire pane.

This winter was the coldest of my young son's life. Below-zero temperatures had created a wonder he had never seen.

Fear-induced anxiety evaporated as I cuddled my warm child. The precious time we shared studying lacy ice patterns was more satisfying than a few minutes of extra rest. I would have the chance to sleep again, but I could never recapture this glowing moment of wide-eyed wonder that my curious three-year-old invited me to share with him.—**Sara Kuester, Brigham City 18th Ward, Brigham City Utah West Stake** □

Gospel topics: motherhood, children, parenting, patience, love, perspective

Capsized!



As I looked out over the expanse of white-capped waves, I knew our lives were out of our hands. Only the Master of the seas could save us now.

BY MICHAEL R. JOHNSON

When Frank, an elderly friend in our ward, invited me and my two young sons on a day-long fishing trip on his 19-foot boat, I jumped at the chance. I'd been itching to take seven-year-old Trevor and nine-year-old Darion on a fishing adventure for halibut and salmon, and this seemed like the perfect opportunity.

We left the boat dock in Kenai, Alaska, at 4:30 A.M. for a 100-mile trip across the pristine, frigid waters of Cook Inlet. The previous two days had been warm and beautiful, but the water of Cook Inlet remained just above freezing.

Around 8:45 A.M. the waters started to get a little rough, with four- to five-foot swells. We had covered about half the trip when the waves became even larger, so Frank and I decided to head west for shelter toward Chizick Island. We had gone west only 15 minutes when the engine suddenly sputtered and died. Seeing the oil

light on, Frank filled the oil reservoir. The engine started but died again after 20 seconds. By now we were aware of the excessive water gathering on the deck of the boat. Frank tried the motor again, but now there was no response.

I knew then that we were in serious trouble. I gave Darion a bucket and told him to start bailing water. The boys were already wearing life preservers; I put mine on and threw another to Frank. Both boys started to cry for their mother. Frank called a mayday on the radio several times before he got a response. He said our location was five miles south of Chizick Island.

"Five miles to the east of the island!" I yelled, but it was too late. I saw Frank grab Trevor's hand as the boat flipped over. In an instant, everything was cold and dark.

I looked up through turquoise water and saw the silhouette of the boat as heavy gear entangled in my life jacket pulled me downward. As I continued to sink, the pressure in my ears was painful and I became desperate for air. Somehow I managed to pull myself free and swim to the surface.

I was only 20 feet from the boat, but it took me two minutes to swim back against the current. I found Darion clinging to a trailing rope from the boat, screaming for me and Trevor as the waves pounded him. Frank had managed to climb the railing on the bow of the boat to the surface, but he had been hit on the head when the boat flipped and had lost hold of Trevor. I felt a horrid sinking feeling when he looked at me and said, "Trevor's not up yet."

Desperate to find my son, I swam over to the hull and yelled for him, hoping he had come up on the other side. There was no answer.

I was reaching beneath the surface for the boat's railing, trying to pull myself under the boat to look for Trevor, when I felt a small hand against mine. I pulled my son's small body deeper to clear the railing, then pulled him up to the surface. I expected to see him lifeless, but to my amazement his eyes looked into mine and he didn't even gasp for air. I felt an overwhelming feeling of thankfulness; I knew Trevor had been protected. He'd been sucked into the cabin as the boat capsized, then pulled the doors open and swam out. Unable to pull himself deep enough to clear the railing, he'd been trapped against the deck until I freed him.

I told Trevor to hold onto my life preserver and not let go. I tried to hang on to the hull, but larger waves kept washing us away from the boat. Fearing we'd be lost at sea, I desperately struggled to get back to the boat each time a wave swept us away. I knew I could not keep this up for long.

I felt myself beginning to suffer from hypothermia. The boys were shivering uncontrollably. Frank suggested we put them up on the hull. He helped me pull the boys up. I realized I was losing muscle

coordination when it took me four attempts to get my foot on the railing to pull myself up. The boys lay down on their stomachs and I lay on top of them, trying to keep them warm. Every third or fourth wave would splash over us, nearly knocking us off.

This was the first chance we'd had to speak and rest. We prayed and asked Father in Heaven for help. As I looked out over the ocean and saw the endless expanse of white-capped waves and gray skies, I knew our lives were out of our hands. Only the Master of the seas could save us now; we could only wait.

Soon we heard the sound of an airplane coming from the west. Filled with hope, I rose to wave. But the searchers did not see us and passed by. I felt some comfort knowing they were looking for us, but the rescuers would be looking in the wrong place since we had given the wrong location during our mayday call.

I continued to pray in my heart, but the hull was slowly getting lower in the water. My sons had stopped crying and shivering now and were lying limply against the boat. I lifted Trevor's face. His lips were blue, his eyes glassy, and his skin colorless. He said he wanted to go to sleep. He seemed to be dying. Darion was in only slightly better condition. I saw that Frank's lips were also turning blue. I, too, had stopped shivering and felt completely numb. I hugged my boys close, savoring my last moments with them. I pictured my wife and tried through my thoughts to send her a message that I loved her.

The next little while was all a blur, but somehow I slowly became conscious of a small black speck on the horizon. The speck continued to grow larger, and within minutes I saw a ship near our boat launch a small inflatable raft. Soon there were two men next to the hull helping us into the raft. Once again I felt an overwhelming feeling of thankfulness; the Lord had saved our lives.

The ship's crew pulled us on board and placed us in warm beds while they treated us for hypothermia. Within two hours we were all nearly recovered.

Later, I spoke with the captain of the vessel in the pilot room. He informed me that quite a number of boats had responded to the mayday call, but everyone had gone south of the island to look for us. He said he was also heading south when he felt something tell him to head east. He even felt impressed to go to certain coordinates.

I am grateful for a Heavenly Father who hears our prayers. I am thankful for a God who inspires through a still, small voice and for a sea captain who listened. And I am grateful for the lives of my children and for every day I have to spend with them and my wife. □

Michael R. Johnson is a member of the Kenai Ward, Soldotna Alaska Stake.

Gospel topics: prayer, faith, spiritual promptings, gratitude



An effective gospel teacher helps class members participate meaningfully in the lesson. Such participation enables students to teach and edify each other.



INCREASING PARTICIPATION IN LESSONS

BY JONN D. CLAYBAUGH AND AMBER BARLOW DAHL

When class members get involved, effective teaching can happen.

A stake leader had been assigned to teach the elders quorum lesson in ward conference. He had obviously spent a good deal of time and effort in preparing, and he spoke with sincerity. But some quorum members were inattentive, some fidgeting restlessly. Why? Was it because the teacher did all the talking? After the closing prayer the teacher felt uncomfortable. As he thought about his lesson, he realized that instead of teaching effectively, he had just given a very long talk.

Teaching that is nourishing to the soul uplifts others, builds their faith, and gives them confidence to meet life's challenges. It motivates them to forsake sin and to come unto Christ, call on His name, obey His commandments, and abide in His love (see D&C 93:1; John 15:10; Moro. 10:32). We all want to be a part of effective teaching, but how can we accomplish this? By doing certain things and avoiding others, teachers in the home and the Church can produce greater interest, participation, actual learning, spiritual edification, and increased understanding in the lives of those they teach.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles recently emphasized the importance of effective teaching: "Now, at a time when our prophet is calling for more faith through hearing the word of God, we must revitalize and reenthroner superior teaching in the Church" ("A Teacher Come from God," *Ensign*, May 1998, 25).

WHAT IS EFFECTIVE GOSPEL TEACHING?

The role of a gospel teacher is "to help individuals take responsibility for learning the gospel—to awaken in them the desire to study, understand, and live the gospel and to show them how to do so. . . . The learning has to be done by the pupil. Therefore it is the pupil who has to be put into action (*Teaching, No Greater Call* [1999], 61).

Successful teachers focus less on imparting what they know and focus more on helping class members gain and develop their own desires for seeking knowledge and inspiration. At home and in Church classrooms we are often ineffective when we stand in front of students and try to "pour" knowledge and growth into others. Speakers in sacrament meetings and conferences and other more formal settings address the congregation and most often do not invite participation. But in classrooms, it is better to follow the model established by the Lord's instructions for the School of the Prophets: "Appoint among yourselves a teacher, and let not all be spokesmen at once; but let one speak at a time and let all listen unto his sayings, *that when all have spoken that all may be edified of all, and that every man may have an equal privilege*" (D&C 88:122; emphasis added).

An effective gospel teacher helps "class members participate meaningfully in the lesson. Such participation enables students to teach and edify each other.

It also can invite the Spirit into the class. It enhances learning by making class members active rather than passive participants. It will also help them apply and live gospel principles.

“Teachers should help class members feel comfortable sharing their testimonies, insights, experiences, questions, and ideas” (“Gospel Teaching and Leadership,” in *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 2: Priesthood and Auxiliary Leader* [1998], 303).

One teacher was asked to teach a Sunday School lesson on Doctrine and Covenants 135–37. He carefully prepared questions and discussion ideas that related to each of the three sections. However, in class he was only able to teach section 135 and did not use his other lesson material. The class became involved in wonderful discussions that revolved around principles in section 135. Numerous class members shared personal ideas and feelings, and the class time quickly ran out. The teacher was initially a little frustrated, but the many comments by class members afterward helped him realize that spending the class time on one section had been guided by the Spirit. The insights, experiences, and testimonies shared by so many were what had made the lesson so successful. Instead of “highlighting” three sections of scripture on that day, his class had gone deeply into one. Testimonies were strengthened, lives were touched, and all had been edified.

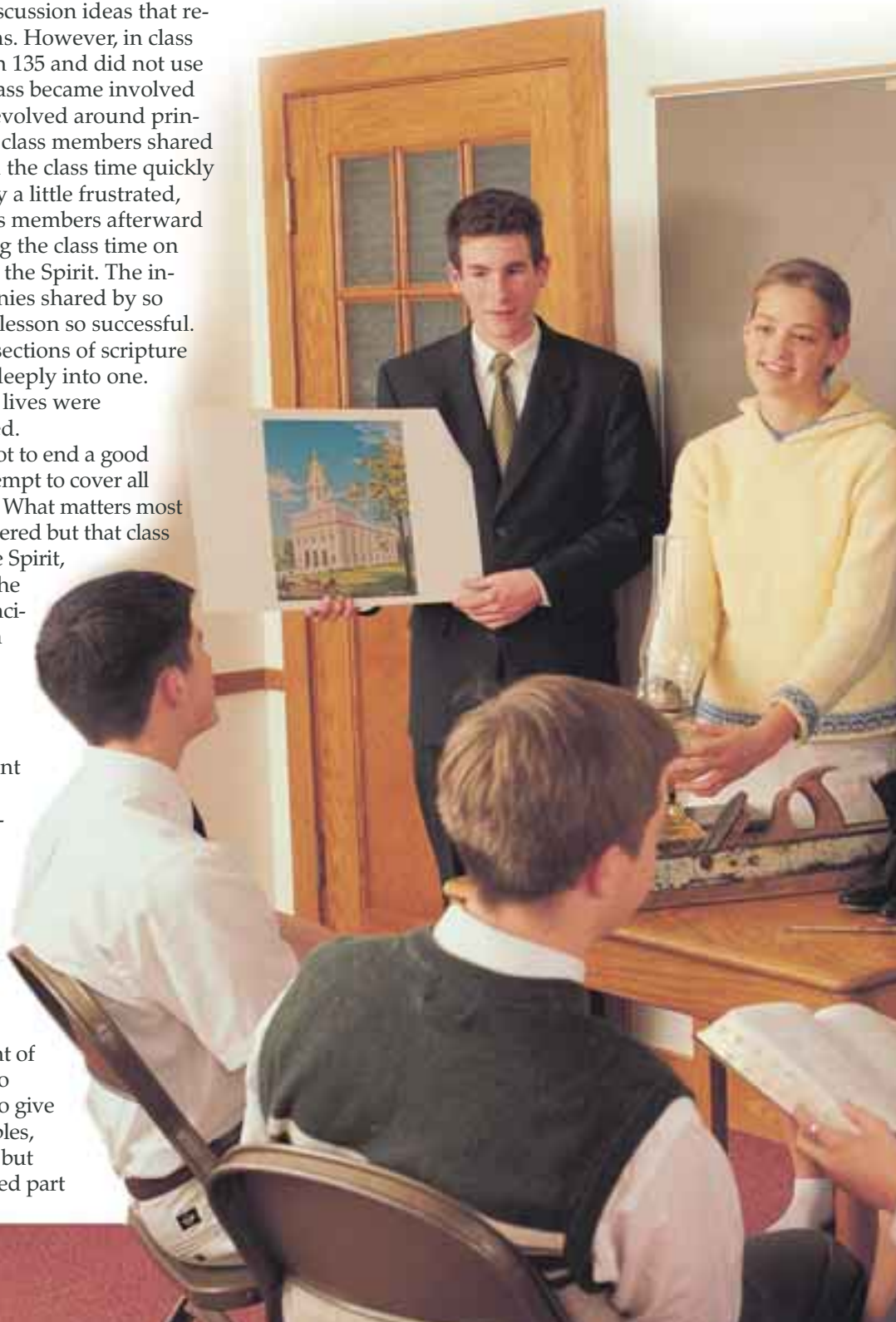
“Teachers should be careful not to end a good discussion prematurely in an attempt to cover all the material they have prepared. What matters most is not the amount of material covered but that class members feel the influence of the Spirit, increase their understanding of the gospel, learn to apply gospel principles in their lives, and strengthen their commitment to live the gospel” (“Gospel Teaching and Leadership,” *Church Handbook of Instructions, Book 2*, 304).

As we strive to increase student participation in our lessons, we may want to consider the following three suggestions: (1) talk less, (2) use teaching methods that promote student participation, and (3) provide positive feedback.

TALK LESS

Teachers who speak 90 percent of class time are probably talking too much. Of course, teachers need to give explanations, instructions, examples, stories, testimonies, and so forth, but their speaking should be a planned part

of promoting participation. In many lessons, students can speak 40 to 60 percent of the time. This approach helps teachers avoid becoming lecturers or the only dispensers of information. Instead, teachers can be facilitators—helping students learn from the scriptures, from other students, and from the Spirit. Of course, teachers may introduce the lesson and help lay some groundwork and, at the end of the class, clarify and summarize the doctrine taught. However, they should also be careful not to take a great deal of time doing this.



“Lessons should help class members see how gospel principles apply to daily living. Encourage discussions about how these principles can influence our feelings about our Father in Heaven, Jesus Christ, ourselves, our families, and our neighbors. Invite participants to live according to the principles being taught.

PARTICIPATION LEADS TO GROWTH



“The more class members read their scriptural assignments, the more they bring their scriptures to class, and the more they discuss what the gospel actually means in their lives, the more will be their inspiration, growth, and joy as they try to solve their personal concerns and challenges.”

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, “Teaching by the Spirit,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1989, 15.

“Involve as many people as possible during the instruction period by inviting them to read aloud, answer questions, or share experiences” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young* [1997], vi).

USE METHODS THAT PROMOTE PARTICIPATION

Teachers or parents could begin a lesson by reading (or having a class member read) a few of the scripture verses or quotes from the lesson material and then asking questions that elicit meaningful responses. Questions that only require a “yes” or “no” answer, questions that most class members know the answer to, and questions that require students to guess what the teacher is thinking will usually not encourage participation and meaningful responses. Rather, ask questions such as:

- What do these verses mean to you?
 - How can we apply this in our lives today?
 - What did the Lord teach in verses . . . about . . . ?
 - What gospel principles do you see in verses . . . ?
 - How does . . . help you understand . . . ?
 - What important things do you see in verses . . . ?
 - What is another way to say . . . ?
 - What would you underline or mark in these verses? Why?
 - How would you say this in your own words?
 - Can someone summarize what has been said?
 - What are some conclusions we can draw from this?
 - What comments or feelings do you have about this?
 - Would anyone like to tell about an experience that illustrates this principle?
 - Do any of you have a testimony or an experience of this that you would be willing to share?
- Here are some examples of some questions for teaching 1 Nephi 16:
- How did each of the members of Lehi’s family feel when Nephi broke his bow?
 - In 1 Nephi 16, which verses indicate Nephi’s feelings?
 - Have any of you ever had an experience when something went wrong and you were not sure how to solve it? Would anyone like to tell us about it?
 - Can any of you tell an experience when a challenge or affliction helped you learn and grow spiritually?
 - Which verse in this chapter do you like the best? Why?

Teachers need to give students time to think about and respond to their questions or invitations



to participate. A brief period of silence is appropriate and should be expected. A teacher could let class members know that the moment of silence is welcome by saying something like, "I know you need to think about it for a few seconds, so when one of you is ready to respond, go ahead and raise your hand." If the teacher is comfortable with the silence, the class members will be also. Teachers should not pressure class members to tell about personal experiences or feelings if they do not freely volunteer. Some experiences may be too sacred to share.

PROVIDE POSITIVE FEEDBACK

Teachers "can help those [they] teach feel more confident about their ability to participate in a discussion if [the teacher] responds positively to each sincere comment" (*Teaching, No Greater Call*, 64). Teachers should not ridicule or criticize any questions, comments, expression of feelings, experiences, or testimonies. Teachers should show courtesy and love and do their best to encourage helpful participation. Teachers can help students feel that their contributions are valued and that their participation is important, even if sometimes they must kindly clarify doctrinal misunderstandings. Teachers should keep in mind that students are taking emotional and spiritual risks when sharing personal insights. They will hesitate to share again if they do not receive positive feedback.

Teachers should not be overly concerned if a student's comment seems to be taking the lesson in a direction that was not intended. Remember the teacher's role is to help *students* learn. Teachers should have the Spirit with them and follow its promptings. If a comment is not helpful to the proper progression of the lesson, the teacher may want to simply respond positively to what has been said, introduce a new topic, and then ask again for participation. Some examples of ways to respond to class members' comments are:

- Thank you for that comment.
- I like the way you put that!
- I think you said it well.
- Let's write that on the board; it is so insightful.
- Did the rest of you hear that? Please say it again.
- Thank you for sharing your feelings.
- What a wonderful testimony you have shared!

Teachers may also want to respond to comments in ways that encourage more participation by saying:

- That is a good question. Who would like to respond to it?
- That's interesting. Please explain more of what you mean.

TEACH STUDENTS, NOT JUST LESSONS



"A gospel teacher does not focus on himself or herself.

One who understands that principle will not look upon his or her calling as 'giving or presenting a lesson,' because that definition views teaching from the standpoint of the teacher, not the student."

Elder Dallin H. Oaks, "Gospel Teaching," *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 79.

- How did you come to feel that way?

If a class member states something that is inappropriate or incorrect, you might want to say:

- Thank you. The principle I want you to think about is. . . .
- I've heard that too, yet my understanding is. . . .

Teachers sometimes have one or two class members who seem always willing to answer questions or make comments. Be grateful for their willingness to participate. President Howard W. Hunter, however, suggested: "Do not fall into the trap that some of us fall into by calling on the ones who are always so bright and eager and ready with the right answer. Look and probe for those who are hanging back, who are shy and retiring and per-

haps troubled in spirit" (*Eternal Investments*, address to Church Educational System instructors, 10 Feb. 1989, 4). Teachers should not, however, pressure or force participation from students who, for whatever reason, prefer not to respond, and teachers should not embarrass or make class members uncomfortable while attempting to involve everyone.

THE JOY OF BEING PART OF GOSPEL TEACHING

Teachers can gain great satisfaction from observing class members as they discover and express truths and principles of the gospel for themselves. As truths of the gospel sink deeper into the hearts and minds of class members, teachers are often surprised to find that insights from class members may be more profound than their own. Effective gospel teachers are humble, willing to give up the "spotlight" and let class members have an important role. Sister Virginia H. Pearce, who served as first counselor in the Young Women general presidency, said: "The skilled teacher does not want students who leave the class talking about how magnificent and unusual the teacher is. This teacher wants students who leave talking about how magnificent the gospel is!" ("The Ordinary Classroom—a Powerful Place for Steady and Continued Growth," *Ensign*, Nov. 1996, 12).

The gospel of Jesus Christ truly is magnificent, and we can strive to match its magnificence with the kind of teaching that uses the knowledge, feelings, ideas, experiences, and testimonies of all class members, "that all may be edified of all." □

Jonn D. Claybaugh is president of the Costa Rica San José Mission. Amber Barlow Dahl is a member of the Centennial Ward, Eagle Idaho Stake.

Gospel topics: teaching, student participation

When I was called to teach the five-year-olds in Primary, I wondered, *Why me?* I was a busy newlywed and a full-time student about to begin student teaching 170 eighth-graders. Nevertheless, the following Sunday I showed up with my manual and accomplished my first day. I shared the lesson material with 12 fidgety but attentive children. We talked about people who loved them, and at the end of the lesson I felt I should say I loved them even though I hardly knew them. Yet as I spoke, I sensed that perhaps they didn't believe me yet.

As the Sundays came and went, however, we learned more about each other. The children would wave at me during sacrament meeting and compete to sit by me during sharing time. It wasn't long before I looked forward to Primary. I came more prepared, and the relationship I had with my class was refreshing.

One Sunday afternoon I opened my door and found Rebecca, one of the children I taught in Primary, standing there with her brother. She gave me a hug and handed me an envelope. I pulled out a pink, slightly crinkled slip of paper and read the purple-crayoned words "I love you, Sister Libby." I felt tears begin to form, and I knew then that our lesson on love was finally complete. □

Katie A. Libby is a member of the Oak Grove First Ward, California Walnut Creek Stake.

Gospel topics: love, Primary, teaching

"I Love You,
Sister
Libby"

BY KATIE A. LIBBY



Helping Others, Helping

Throughout the history of the restored Church, Latter-day Saints have sought to live the principles of welfare and humanitarian service.

Latter-day Saint practices in helping others are grounded in the teachings and example of the Lord Jesus Christ. “Inasmuch as you impart of your substance unto the poor, ye will do it unto me,” He has said (D&C 42:31).

In announcing the welfare program of 1936, the First Presidency said, “Our primary purpose was to set up, in so far as it might be possible, a system under which the curse of idleness would be done away with, the evils of a dole abolished, and independence, industry, thrift and self respect be once more established amongst our people. The aim of the Church is to help the people to help themselves” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1936, 3).

When President Thomas S. Monson, First Counselor in the First Presidency, was a young bishop in a Salt Lake City ward with an unusually high number of widows, he spoke with President J. Reuben Clark, who had been a principal architect of the welfare program. Knowing that President Monson was a newly appointed bishop, President Clark emphasized the need for the bishop to know his people, to understand





The stove at the left of this picture was used by Clara Spencer of Kanab, Utah, a widowed mother of eight, to provide for the needs of her family. Latter-day Saints know there is dignity in work and view it as a blessing. Above inset: As this photograph from the 1890s shows, when deacons collected fast offerings, some used wagons as they gathered commodities for the needy.

ADMINISTER TO THEIR RELIEF



“Now for a man to consecrate his property . . . to the Lord,

is nothing more nor less than to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the widow and fatherless, the sick and afflicted, and do all he can to administer to their relief in their afflictions, and for him and his house to serve the Lord.”

Joseph Smith, Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith (1976), 127.



Top: This sewing machine was used for 53 years by Rachel Ivins Grant, mother of President Heber J. Grant, to support her family after her husband died. President Grant remembers how he sat underneath the sewing machine as a boy and ran the pedal for his mother when she was too tired to keep it going herself. Upper right: This painting of Latter-day Saints baking apple pies on a work project captures the spirit of welfare work as all work together for the common good. Above: Labels are glued onto cans as they roll through this machine and come out the other end ready for boxing.



PAINTING BY EARL JONIES

their circumstances, and to minister to their needs. Then President Clark recounted the story recorded in the Gospel of Luke wherein the Savior raised from the dead the son of the widow of Nain (see Luke 7:11–17).

President Monson tenderly recounts what happened next: “When President Clark closed the Bible, I noticed that he was weeping. In a quiet voice, he said, ‘Tom, be kind to the widow and look after the poor’” (“A Provident Plan—A Precious Promise,” *Ensign*, May 1986, 62).

Shown are images from a Museum of Church History and Art exhibit that traced the history of various Church programs designed to provide for those in need and to teach us to become self-reliant. □



Above: These products represent the large variety of food and household items the Church has provided to those in need over the years. The baseball caps belonged to Ralph Taylor of the Salt Lake Pioneer Stake, who wore them during the 50 years he volunteered at the dairy. Bottom: In the fall of 1939, Deseret Industries began using trucks like this to transport goods.

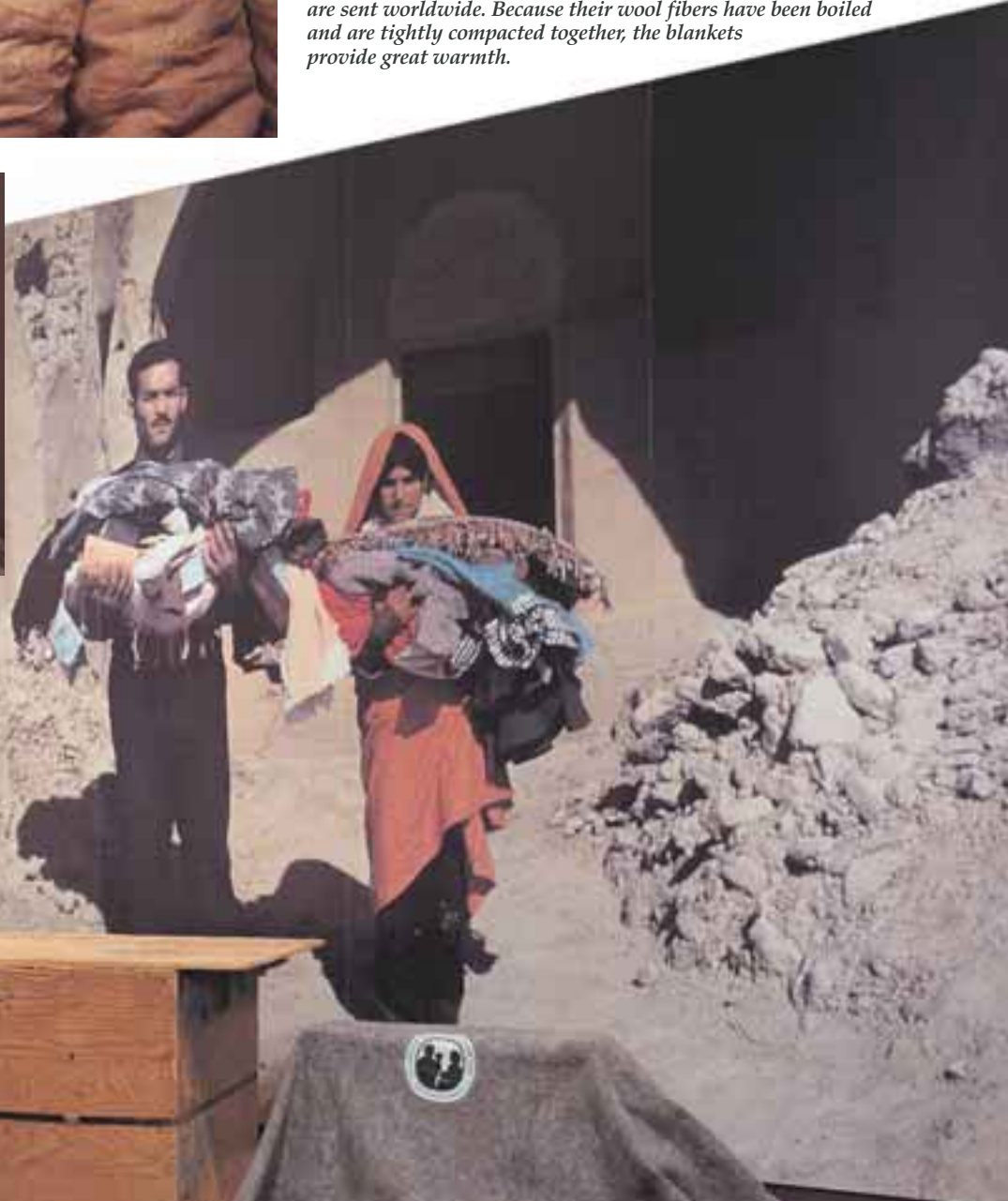


Above: One Sunday each month, while a World War II prisoner of war, Dutch Latter-day Saint Pieter Vlam and those who shared his beliefs went without two meals and shared some of their rations (above left) with other members of the camp.





Left: Dutch farms were destroyed during World War II by German armies. After the war, when Dutch Latter-day Saints began to grow enough food for their own use, the Church requested that they send potatoes and herring to German members living in worse conditions. This required the Dutch to put aside their feelings of hurt and injury and to think about those with whom they had been at war. Below left: Not all help is institutional. Individuals such as Dr. Emanuel Kissi of Accra, Ghana, make a difference with projects they start. Below: Each year more than 60 million refugees flee from political violence or natural disasters. Emergency relief blankets made by the Church are sent worldwide. Because their wool fibers have been boiled and are tightly compacted together, the blankets provide great warmth.





PAINTING BY JUDITH MEHR



The gardening clothes of President Spencer W. Kimball's wife, Camilla (top left), and the painting of a family working in their garden (top right) remind us that gardening helps us become self-reliant. Above: Some of the clothes donated to Deseret Industries are bundled and sent to others in need worldwide. Right: This pump was developed by the Andean Children's Foundation in conjunction with the Church's Humanitarian Services. Inexpensive pumps like this are now in operation high in the Andes, providing precious water for many families. Far right: A few of the many Deseret brand products packaged over the years for use by those in need.



Sand Trap

By Gary M. Johnson

One Saturday morning many years ago, my brothers and sisters and I scurried around the house, doing our chores early. We were excited because Dad had promised to take the family for a ride in the five-year-old station wagon he had recently bought. We had wanted him to get a newer vehicle, but he said a newer car would be too expensive. Besides, he said, the one we bought was heavier and would be safer in an accident. That was an important factor for Mom, who had recently been in a terrible head-on collision and had almost died.

Once we had finished preparing everything, we all piled into the car—Mom, Dad, and seven children, including my baby brother. Since we were only going out for a Saturday-afternoon drive, we didn't pack a lunch or take anything to drink.

We made our way out to the highway and headed north. Being early fall in Needles, California, it was hot, and this was before cars had air-conditioning. The vista around us was the bleak, open desert, with scattered plants, an occasional outcropping of rock or a telephone pole, and the low-level mountain ranges on the horizon. Despite the heat and barren scenery, we were content to be on a fun family outing.

The mood of contentment was broken, however, by an apprehensive whimper from my mother. The memory of her accident was still fresh, and the sight of oncoming cars frightened her terribly. Dad decided that for her sake he had to get off the highway. "Here we are," he said in a cheery voice as he turned onto a dirt road that

followed a row of huge power lines. Leaving a cloud of dust behind us, the car whistled down the old road, and to my 13-year-old mind this was all great fun.

Enjoying the ride, none of us children noticed the troubled look that came to Dad's face. But my mother knew something was wrong. "What is it, Anthony?" she asked.

"Well," he answered, "it's probably nothing, but that sand out there looks treacherous. We had better head back." With that, he found a wide spot on top of a little hill and turned the car around.

We started back down the small incline and headed up the next little hill—and then it happened. The car sank in soft sand. Several of us got out and pushed as hard as we could, but it would not move forward. We managed to back it up onto some solid ground so that Dad could get a run at the sandy area and try to drive through it. His repeated attempts at this failed, however, especially since he had to be careful not to back up too far into another sandy place. Each attempt moved the car a little ahead, but then it would sink even deeper into the soft, powdery sand.

The girls started to cry now. "We're thirsty, Mom." As the hot afternoon sun beat down, we could see heat waves coming up off the sand, distorting the view of the mountains on the horizon.

Then off in the distance we heard a faint sound coming toward us. The drone of a single-engine aircraft grew louder and louder as it approached our position. "Oh, we are saved!" I cried as I saw the airplane coming. "Let's all wave him down!" Frantically we waved our arms. This was the airplane that inspected the power lines, and the pilot flew so low that we could





Apparently thinking our frantic waves for help were simply a greeting, the pilot flew off.

see him leaning out the window. He was returning, with a vigorous wave of his own, what he must have thought was a greeting from us. As the plane flew off into the distance and the sound of its engine faded softly away, we knew we were on our own again.

The situation was growing desperate. We had no food or water, my mother was struggling with a now hysterical infant, the four girls were crying, and even my brother and I began to doubt our chances of getting home safely.

Dad called us together and said, "We have only one thing left to do. Let's ask Heavenly Father for help." We all knelt down in the burning sand and bowed our heads as Dad poured out his heart in behalf of the entire family. He explained our situation in detail to the Lord, including all of the things we had done to free ourselves, and then he pleaded for help.

After the prayer we stood, and Dad said, "Let's try it one more time." He had all of us stay out of the car while he backed it up to make one more run. The engine roared as Dad took off as fast as he could. The car hit the sand, but this time it kept going as if it were floating. Dad drove to the top of the next hill and stopped on solid, rocky ground. We all cheered and ran toward the car. When we reached it, Dad was still sitting at the wheel, shaking and sobbing, something I had never seen him do before. When we asked him what the matter was, he looked up and said that it seemed to him as if the car had been lifted and carried over the sand by an unseen power.

It was a quiet ride home as the bright orange colors of the setting sun shone in the western sky. No one spoke, as if not to disturb the reverent feeling that lingered among us in the car. While I recognize that answers to prayers

come in various forms and are not always dramatic, I am grateful to Heavenly Father for the blessings of that day. □

Gary M. Johnson is a member of the Needles Ward, Lake Havasu City Arizona Stake.

Gospel topics: prayer, faith, trials, family, fatherhood

In the Palm of His Hand

By Emma Ernestina Sánchez Sánchez

The first few years of our marriage seemed nearly perfect. After my husband and I were sealed in the Mexico City D. F. Mexico Temple, we both graduated from the university and our first daughter was born. My husband had a good job and was called as bishop in our ward. Then we were able to move to Jalisco, a part of Mexico where my grandparents had lived. We had always dreamed of rearing our children in a peaceful place, and Jalisco met the desires of our hearts. Our way of life, however, would soon change dramatically.

In Jalisco, our second daughter was born. Unfortunately, I suffered severe complications after her birth. We were

able to meet the expenses from our savings, but then, two weeks later, my husband lost his job. With no income, we had to move from our house. Credit card bills, car payments, and rent were strangling us.

Eventually, my husband began to work nights as a taxi driver. Frequently his expenses exceeded his profits, but his work did bring a little food to the table. Then the car broke down, and even that little source of income ended. We sold or pawned many of our

possessions. At the same time, Mexico underwent a serious currency devaluation, which added greatly to our financial distress.

My husband was emotionally and physically exhausted, so I got a job as a teacher in a bilingual elementary school. The work was hard, the salary small, and I had to leave my little ones in the care of a Church member. To save money, we moved to a cheaper place in a poorer section of town.

As I struggled to go to work,

I planted corn near the sidewalk, then received permission to plant a garden on property belonging to friends.



care for the family, keep up the house, and participate at church, I became very depressed. One terrible night I was so distressed I had to be hospitalized. After giving me a sedative, the doctor told me, "You're drowning yourself in your problems. That's for cowards, and I don't think that is what you are. Think about it."

Her words resounded in my mind, and I closed my eyes, searching for something to give me courage. I reviewed my life. *Yes, all our material possessions are gone, I told myself, but I am still alive, and I have a wonderful husband and two precious daughters.* I remembered I had not been born to accumulate goods or to live in tranquillity. I had come to serve my family and others and to build the kingdom of God.

When I returned home, I prayed as never before. I pleaded with my Heavenly Father to strengthen me. I spoke with my bishop, and he told me, "The Lord will remove from your path that which is hurting you." The following day I learned that I had been fired from my job without any explanation. The same day, I learned I had been granted a scholarship to further my education.

One morning, the telephone, which had not worked for months, rang to bring the news that my husband had received a teaching job. The phone immediately stopped working again, but it didn't matter. My husband had work!

As never before, welfare and self-reliance principles took hold in our home. I learned to process wheat and soybeans for storage. I planted corn near the sidewalk, then received permission to plant a garden on property belonging to friends. God blessed our little garden, which was barely a square meter of ground. It

produced an abundance of food, including squash and alfalfa.

The hard work—and the food I was able to store—tamed my fear and filled me with hope. As my attitude changed, I was able to see the hand of the Lord in our lives. We were blessed with good health; none of us even had a cold. Never, even in the most difficult times, did we stop feeding the missionaries. The children always had food, and we had plenty of invitations to eat with friends. One day I was finally able to buy a second cylinder of propane for our stove. Immediately the contents of the previous cylinder ran out. Typically, a cylinder lasts a month and a half, but this one had lasted for months.

Out of our trials we learned some important lessons. We learned to value the counsel of our leaders. We learned to receive; it is good to serve, but it is also important to let others serve you. Both my husband and I were able to get additional job training without paying for it. My beloved in-laws were always conscious of our needs, and I found in my mother-in-law a great friend.

And our marriage grew and was strengthened. One night my husband took me into his arms and said, "I don't care if they put us out on the street. If you are by my side, I will have the courage to start all over again."

Perhaps most importantly, we came to see things from an eternal point of view. We came to understand that both in good times and bad, God shelters us in the palm of His hand. □

Emma Ernestina Sánchez Sánchez is a member of the Las Aguilas Ward, Guadalajara Mexico Moctezuma Stake.

Gospel topics: adversity, faith, home production and storage

Their Service Opened Our Hearts

By Judith A. Wilkinson

When we first really became acquainted with the Church, the winter had arrived early in New England and covered everything with a sheet of ice and snow. We had been living in Watertown, a suburb of Boston, Massachusetts, for almost a year and a half. My husband, Richard, would soon be finishing his postdoctoral work and had gone to Colorado for a job interview.

Our children, Mike, Mark, Misty, and 11-month-old Michelle, were helping me clean the playroom when suddenly little Michelle began to vomit violently. I was afraid she might have eaten something toxic among the toys. Moments earlier she had been happily playing, but now she was obviously very ill. Within minutes she had become listless. Her temperature was rising rapidly, soon reaching 105°F (40.6°C). While my sons sponged her with cool water, I called the doctor, who told me to take her to the hospital emergency room immediately.

The streets were icy and narrow, and I was not sure of the way. When at last I saw the hospital, I felt a wave of relief. The doctor's diagnosis was the flu, and he prescribed some medication to control the fever. I felt strongly that her illness was more serious, but the doctor seemed sure she would be fine. I took Michelle home, but never before with my children's illnesses had I felt so uneasy. That night I moved

Michelle's bed into my room. Every two hours I checked her temperature, which remained under control, but I spent most of the night watching her breathe. In the morning when I looked at my baby, she was gray, weak, and listless. I felt afraid and desperate.

Though it had stormed all night and the roads were treacherous, I tried to block out everything other than getting Michelle to the hospital. When we arrived, Michelle was rushed into an examination room. Cloudy fluid obtained from a spinal tap indicated a strong possibility of spinal meningitis. From the waiting room, I called Richard in Colorado, and he said he would be on the first plane back to Boston.

Michelle was transferred to intensive care. By this time it must have been near noon, but it was still dark, cold, and stormy outside. I sat alone in a room, waiting until I could see Michelle. I watched the snow hit the window and felt cold, alone, and helpless. I tried to pray, but the memorized prayers I had been taught felt so empty. They did not express my feelings. I then prayed as I had never prayed before. I prayed to my Heavenly Father as if I were kneeling before Him. I prayed about my feelings and my hopes. I prayed for His help.

At last I was allowed to see Michelle. She seemed even grayer than she had earlier, and she lay so still. Monitoring equipment and IV tubes were attached all over her small body. To even find a place to touch her was difficult. The day remained dark, but as I sat near her bed the clouds briefly parted and a ray of light fell across her bed and filled the room. I felt warm and comforted. I was filled with a sense that all would be as it

was supposed to be. I did not know what Michelle's fate would be, but I knew things would be as they should be, and I felt at peace.

That afternoon Richard arrived. As the doctor confirmed Michelle's diagnosis of spinal meningitis, Richard's face showed all the fear and desperation I had felt earlier. The doctor told us Michelle's chance of surviving the next three days was remote. Then he explained that if she were to survive, she would most likely be deaf, blind, or brain damaged. I felt strongly that if she didn't know we were there, if we didn't touch her, she would drift away forever.

Child care for our other children became a major problem. I belonged to a baby-sitting co-op, but no one would risk taking care of our children. Michelle's lab results showed the type of meningitis she had was not contagious, but it made no difference. At first even the school refused to allow our boys to attend. There were, however, two couples who came to our aid; one couple, the Romrells, were members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The Romrells apparently told their Relief Society of our problem. The Relief Society president and others from the Watertown Ward brought us food and provided child care so we could spend time with Michelle. These people we had never met helped us when we so desperately needed it.

Michelle survived those critical three days and slowly grew stronger. Richard's mother was able to come from California to help look after our children. If during those first three days we had not had the help from members of the Church, I don't know how we would have managed. Michelle celebrated her first birthday in the hospital, but Richard and I received the greatest gift. On that

day, we got to hold Michelle in our arms. Even more than on the day she was born, we knew the Lord had entrusted us with her care.

This experience prompted us to begin investigating the Church. It did not happen swiftly, but over the next several years, each time we moved we met new and wonderful members of the Church, and our interest and investigation continued. The seed planted in our hearts by the Relief Society sisters in Watertown was nourished by the examples of many loving members. Today Michelle is a perfectly healthy and intelligent woman. She recently gave birth to her second child, and we are all members of Christ's true Church. □

Judith A. Wilkinson is a member of the Ashington Branch, Sunderland England Stake.

Gospel topics: service, fellowship, example, prayer, conversion





My motorcycle was my idol until a friend introduced me and my family to the gospel.

Giving Up My Graven Image

By Manuel J. Rosario

I used to have a 1978 Harley-Davidson motorcycle. I had invested a huge sum of money in it and was indescribably proud of it. It was everything to me. Every Sunday I joined a group of friends in our native city of Patillas, Puerto Rico, and we rode our motorbikes around the island. We forgot all our problems, our families, God—everything—for a brief period of pleasure on those bikes. In essence,

my motorcycle was my idol.

That all changed when a former classmate, Jaime Rivera Gómez, introduced me to the Church. I will be eternally grateful to Jaime and to the missionaries for their teachings, patience, and genuine love. My wife and I were baptized on 31 March 1996.

Finding the gospel of Jesus Christ changed our lives completely. I immediately sold my motorcycle for much less money than I had invested in it. But the sacrifice was worth it. As I changed my life, Heavenly Father—the only true God—poured out blessings on me. Now I am happy. My home is happy. I love my wife and my

children. We hold family home evening, and we pray and serve the Lord as a family.

Three months after becoming members of the Church, we traveled to the Washington D.C. Temple and were baptized for some of our ancestors. Our second visit to the temple was in July 1997. There we received our endowments, were sealed, and performed sacred ordinances for our loved ones.

I know God loves me, and I am striving each day to become more like Him. □

Manuel J. Rosario is a member of the Arroyo Branch, Guayama Puerto Rico District.

Gospel topics: conversion, repentance, Ten Commandments

CAREFULLY SCHOOLED IN THE FIRST PRINCIPLES & ORDINANCES



Young Joseph Smith gained understanding of the first principles and ordinances by revelation from God, and sometimes by painful experience.

BY RICHARD E. BENNETT

Who among us knew the first principles of the Gospel of Christ until we heard them from the Elders of Israel? Who told us that it was right to be baptized in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins? Who taught us it was right to receive the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands? . . . It was communicated to Joseph Smith by the opening of the heavens, by the ministering of Holy Angels, and by the voice of God. . . . Until these communications were made known [to Joseph], the inhabitants of the world were wrapped in ignorance; they knew nothing about God nor the principles of eternity, nor the way to save themselves nor anybody else.”¹

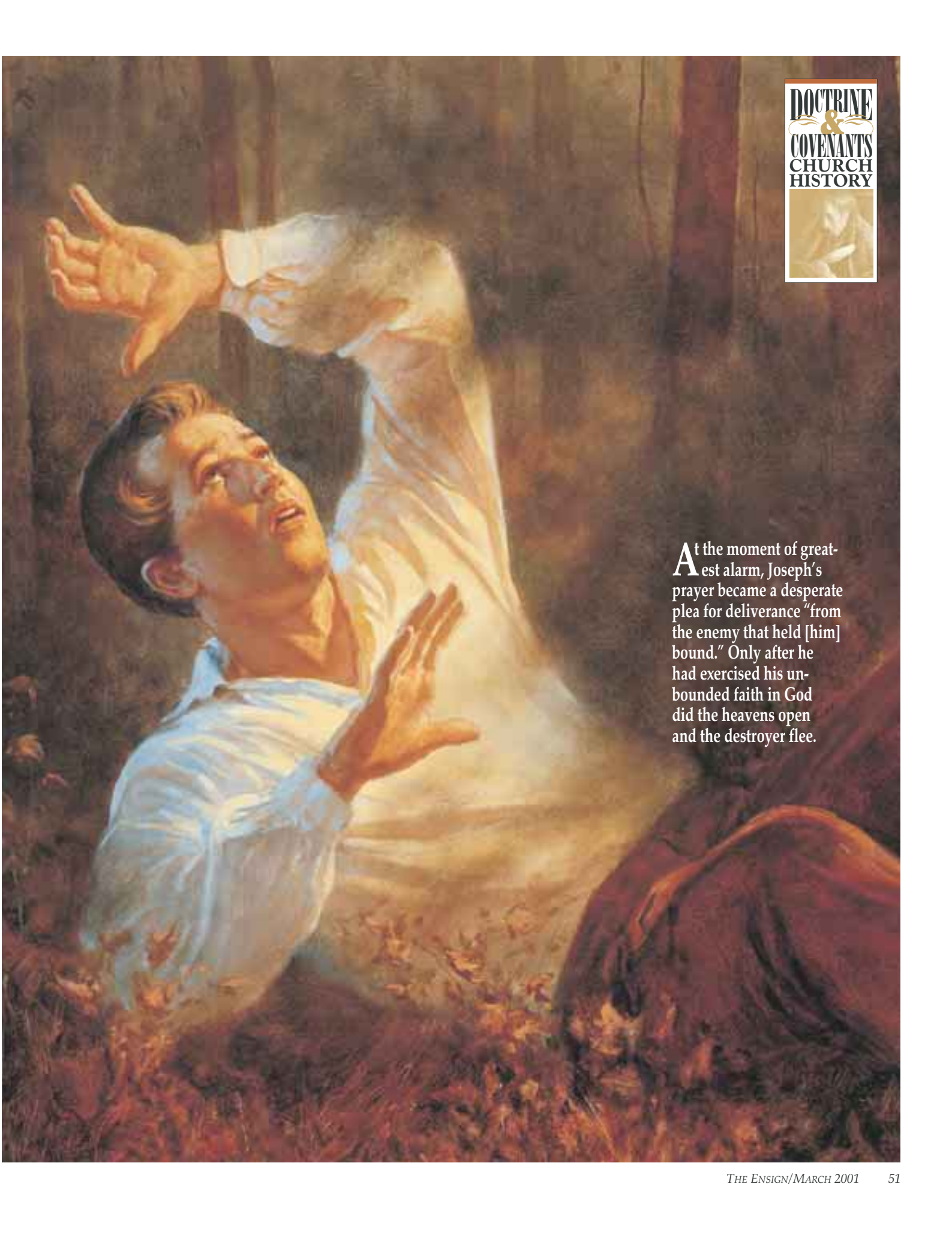
So taught President John Taylor regarding the importance of the first principles and ordinances of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ and of the role of the Prophet Joseph Smith in bringing them forward. What other teachings are as important to the Church’s core teachings as these saving doctrines? They were so carefully impressed upon the Prophet’s mind in perfect, instructional sequence that by the time he wrote them as the fourth Article of Faith in the famous Wentworth letter of 1842, they were far more than words; they had become part of his being:

“We believe that the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are: first, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, Repentance; third, Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; fourth, Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost” (A of F 1:4).

Early Church history shows that the Prophet Joseph Smith came to know of these saving principles in at least three ways: (1) from heavenly messengers, (2) from the consequences of some unwise decisions, (3) from his translation of ancient scripture, and (4) from frequent divine inspiration. It was a careful schooling, prepared and profound.

FROM HEAVENLY MESSENGERS

Unschooling in the religions of man, the boy prophet Joseph lacked wisdom. After reading James 1:5, he decided to pray and ask God which of all the churches was right. Though young Joseph had been foreordained to his latter-day work,² faith must precede the blessing. In the divine drama of the First Vision, wherein the purposes of God, and the power of Satan and the desires of a mortal being were all manifest, the boy prophet learned much more than



At the moment of greatest alarm, Joseph's prayer became a desperate plea for deliverance "from the enemy that held [him] bound." Only after he had exercised his unbounded faith in God did the heavens open and the destroyer flee.



Joseph, the prophet-apprentice, learned much about the first principles from his master teacher, Moroni.

which church to join. While in the act of praying vocally for the first time in his life and in a secluded grove, he was suddenly “seized upon by some power which entirely overcame” him and which was intent upon his “sudden destruction” (JS—H 1:15). Thus his quiet petition was abruptly transformed into a life and death struggle. Gripped in terror and unable to cry out for help, Joseph had nowhere to turn but his greatest resource. At that moment of greatest alarm, his prayer became a desperate plea for deliverance “from the enemy that held [him] bound.” Only after he had exercised his unbounded faith in God did the heavens open and the destroyer flee.

Of this truth President Gordon B. Hinckley has said: “It was faith, the simple faith of a fourteen-year-old boy, that took him into the woods that spring morning. It was faith that took him to his knees in pleading for understanding. The marvelous fruit of that faith was a vision glorious and beautiful, of which this great work is but the extended shadow.”³

Of all the many lessons that Joseph learned from the First Vision, surely among the most important were that God does answer prayers and that by faith He can save us in our darkest hour. His faith saved him from his greatest trouble, and from it came the revelation of the Father and the Son and the introduction of the long-prophesied Restoration.

Beginning in 1823, the prophet-apprentice learned much about the first principles from his master teacher, Moroni. Joseph later wrote, “I . . . received instruction and intelligence from him at each of our interviews, respecting what the Lord was going to do, and how and in what manner his kingdom was to be conducted in the last days” (JS—H 1:54). When finally entrusted with the gold plates, the young prophet understood the blueprint of the restored gospel, its organization and essential doctrines. President Joseph F. Smith said of this instruction: “He was taught by the angel Moroni. He received his education from above, from God Almighty, and not from man-made institutions, . . . [and] he possessed a knowledge of God and of his law.”⁴

The young prophet also learned firsthand about baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost from heavenly messengers. While translating the Book of Mormon with his scribe, Oliver Cowdery, they “on a certain day [in May 1829] went into the woods” in Harmony Township, Pennsylvania, on the banks of the Susquehanna River “to pray and inquire of the Lord respecting baptism for the remission of sins, that [they had] found mentioned in the translation of the plates” (JS—H 1:68). A vision of yet another heavenly messenger, the resurrected John the Baptist, opened to them. To his young inquirers, John said, “Upon you



my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah, I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins" (JS—H 1:69; emphasis in original). Joseph then baptized Oliver, and afterwards Oliver baptized Joseph.

They then experienced a moment of intense joy and personal revelation. Remembered Oliver, "This earth [has not] power to give the joy, to bestow the peace, or comprehend the wisdom which was contained in each sentence as they were delivered by the power of the Holy Spirit!"⁵ Joseph also wrote: "No sooner had I baptized Oliver Cowdery, than the Holy Ghost fell upon him, and he stood up and prophesied many things which should shortly come to pass. And again, so soon as I had been baptized by him [Oliver], I also had the spirit of prophecy, when, standing up, I prophesied concerning the rise of this Church. . . . We were filled with the Holy Ghost, and rejoiced in the God of our salvation" (JS—H 1:73).

Although blessed abundantly, they learned from John the Baptist that the gift of the Holy Ghost would not be conferred upon them until later with the restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood by the Apostles Peter, James, and John.⁶ And though the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery baptized other believers for the remission of sins between May 1829 and April 1830, at the organizational meeting of the Church on 6 April 1830 in Fayette, Seneca County, New York, the Prophet noted the following: "We then laid our hands on each [previously baptized] individual member of the Church present that they might receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, and be confirmed members of the Church of Christ. The Holy Ghost was poured out upon us to a very great degree—some prophesied, whilst we all praised the Lord, and rejoiced exceedingly."⁷ The Prophet was "inspired of the Holy Ghost to lay the foundation" of the Church "and to build it up unto the most holy faith" (D&C 21:2).

FROM THE CONSEQUENCES OF SOME UNWISE DECISIONS

Three and a half years after faith was the active first principle in the Sacred Grove in 1820, Joseph knelt in prayer feeling "condemned for [his] weaknesses and imperfections," yet he had "full confidence in obtaining a divine manifestation" (see JS—H 1:29). It was an earnest desire to set things

right with God and to repent of some unwise decisions that once more drove him to his knees. Subsequently, on the evening of 21 September 1823, an angel from the presence of God revealed many scriptural truths to the forgiven lad. Joseph was given specific instructions pertaining to the work God had for him to do. Faith opened the heavens the first time, and faith and repentance together did so the second time.

After a season of difficult and intermittent translation of the Book of Mormon, the young prophet in June 1828 reluctantly surrendered 116 pages of Book of Mormon manuscript into the hands of his older benefactor and scribe, Martin Harris. When Martin returned empty-handed and confessed that he had lost the manuscript, Joseph sprang from his breakfast table in anguish and exclaimed in utter self-condemnation: "Oh, my God, my God. All is lost, is lost! What shall I do? I have sinned. It is I who tempted the wrath of God."⁸

Utterly downcast and full of godly sorrow for his disobedience, Joseph stood rebuked and chastened by the Lord. "How strict were your commandments," the Lord instructed, ". . . and behold, how oft you have transgressed. . . . For thou hast suffered the counsel of thy director to be trampled upon from the beginning" (D&C 3:5–6, 15). It was a heaven-sent excoriation that Joseph's penitent soul understood. Nevertheless, in what must have been soaring relief to the young Prophet, the Lord said, "Remember, God is merciful; . . . and thou art still chosen, and art again called to the work" (D&C 3:10). This early experience impressed upon Joseph Smith's mind that repentance and trust in God rather than man are indeed requisite for doing the work of the Lord.

Thus from the spring of 1820 to the spring of 1830, on that 10-year road of instruction from Palmyra to Fayette, the Prophet came to personally know and live the first principles and ordinances of the gospel from what he experienced, suffered, overcame, and had revealed to him by heavenly messengers. Just as members of the original church of Christ had been taught by Peter on the day of Pentecost to "repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38), so also had the Prophet Joseph been taught these principles in our day, culminating in the Holy Ghost being poured out to a great degree.



When Martin Harris returned empty-handed and confessed he had lost the manuscript, Joseph sprang from the breakfast table in anguish, "All is lost, is lost! What shall I do? I have sinned."

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FROM TRANSLATION OF ANCIENT SCRIPTURE

Although heavenly messengers were his most intimate instructors, the young prophet also learned of the importance of these principles from the writings he translated, particularly during the fulfillment of his divinely appointed role as translator of the Book of Mormon. The approximately 80 calendar days he spent translating the message of Cumorah into the English language with the aid of the Urim and Thummim and by the power of the Holy Ghost, constituted yet another divine schooling.

The inspired contents of the Book of Mormon deeply impressed the two men. “No men, in their sober senses,” Oliver Cowdery recalled, “could translate and write the directions given to the Nephites from the mouth of the Savior, of the precise manner in which men should build up His Church, and especially when corruption had spread an uncertainty over all forms and systems practiced among men, without desiring a privilege of showing the willingness of the heart by being buried in the liquid grave, to answer a ‘good conscience by the resurrection of Jesus Christ’” (JS—H 1:71, note on pages 58–59).

The first principles and ordinances of the gospel run like a golden thread of truth throughout the entire Book of Mormon, from 1 Nephi through Moroni. The prophet Nephi, son of Lehi, called these principles “the doctrine of Christ” (2 Ne. 31:2). “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, I know that if ye shall follow the Son, with full purpose of heart, acting no hypocrisy and no deception before God, but with real intent, repenting of your sins, witnessing unto the Father that ye are willing to take upon you the name of Christ, by baptism—yea, by following your Lord and your Savior down into the water, according to his word, behold, then shall ye receive the Holy Ghost; yea, then cometh the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost” (2 Ne. 31:13).

Nephi’s younger brother Jacob warned that those who reject the gospel “and deny the good word of Christ, and the power of God, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, and quench the Holy Spirit, and make a mock of the great plan of redemption” will be brought “to stand with shame and awful guilt before the bar of God” (Jacob 6:8–9).

The prophet Mormon declared in one of his final letters: “The first fruits of repentance is baptism; and baptism cometh by faith unto the fulfilling the commandments; and the fulfilling the commandments bringeth remission of sins;

“And the remission of sins bringeth meekness, and lowliness of heart; and because of meekness and lowliness of heart cometh the visitation of the Holy Ghost, which Comforter filleth with hope and perfect love” (Moro. 8:25–26).

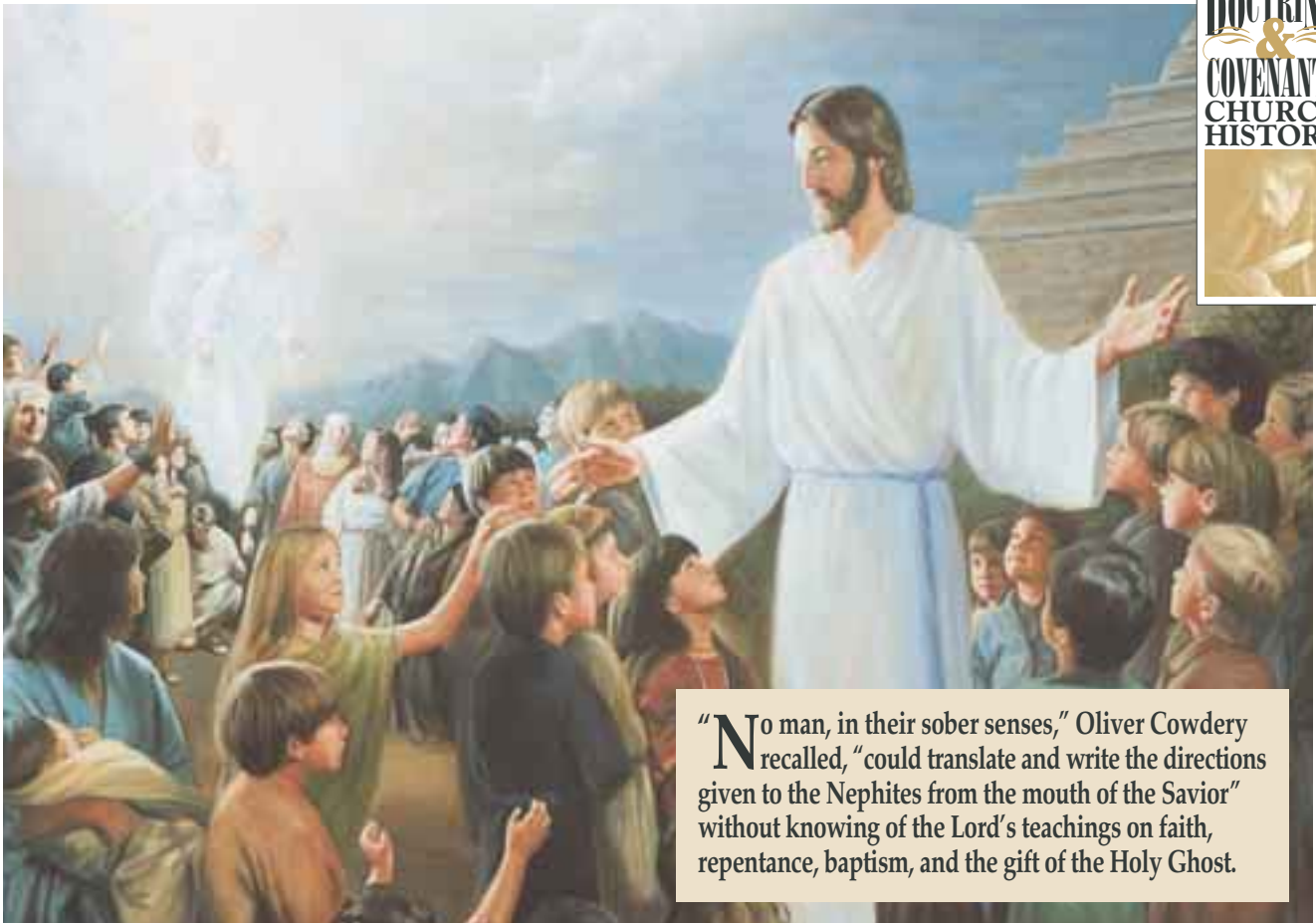
When the Prophet Joseph Smith was translating the Book of Mormon, he found these first principles especially well presented through a powerful sequence of the following four grand discourses in the book of Mosiah: the sermons of King Benjamin (Mosiah 2–5) and Abinadi (Mosiah 11–17) and the teachings of Alma (Mosiah 18, 25–26) and his son, Alma the Younger (Mosiah 27–28). The common denominator in them all is the mission and redemption of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent. Furthermore, a central message of King Benjamin’s sermon is faith in Jesus Christ. “Believe in God,” he taught, “believe that he is, and that he created all things, both in heaven and in earth; believe that he has all wisdom, and all power, both in heaven and in earth; believe that man doth not comprehend all the things which the Lord can comprehend. . . . And now, if you believe all these things see that ye do them” (Mosiah 4:9–10).

Repentance, the second principle, is the primary focus of Abinadi’s message to King Noah and his wicked priests. Abinadi boldly preached what the Lord had told him: “Except they *repent* I will visit them in mine anger,” “except they *repent* . . . I will deliver them into the hands of their enemies,” “except this people *repent* . . . they shall be brought into bondage,” and “except they *repent* . . . I will not hear their prayers” (see Mosiah 11:20–21, 23, 25; emphasis added). After rehearsing the vital messages of the Ten Commandments and the Christ-centered prophecies of Isaiah to his unbelieving audience, Abinadi concluded: “And now, ought ye not to tremble and repent of your sins, and remember that only in and through Christ ye can be saved?” (Mosiah 16:13).

One of Abinadi’s converts, Alma, fled from King Noah into the wilderness and preached “repentance, and redemption, and faith on the Lord” to his followers (Mosiah 18:7). Alma’s teachings also emphasized that the ordinance of baptism is a covenant and sequel to faith and repentance—a natural progression in the doctrine of Christ. “Now I say unto you,” he said near the Waters of Mormon, “if this be the desire of your hearts, what have you against being baptized in the name of the Lord, as a witness before him that ye have entered into a covenant with him, that ye will serve him and keep his commandments, that he may pour out his Spirit more abundantly upon you?” (Mosiah 18:10).



The young prophet also learned of the importance of the first principles and ordinances from the writings he translated, particularly the Book of Mormon.



No man, in their sober senses," Oliver Cowdery recalled, "could translate and write the directions given to the Nephites from the mouth of the Savior" without knowing of the Lord's teachings on faith, repentance, baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Also, if Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery had not fully understood before translating this passage that baptism was to be done by immersion for the remission of sins, they certainly would have afterward.

The last great sermon in Mosiah directly addresses the need for a rebirth of the soul by the Holy Ghost. The account of Alma the Younger's miraculous conversion speaks less of baptism by water and more of baptism by fire, or being born of the Spirit:

"Marvel not that all mankind . . . must be born again; yea, born of God, changed from their carnal and fallen state, to a state of righteousness, being redeemed of God, becoming his sons and daughters;

"And thus they become new creatures; and unless they do this, they can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God" (Mosiah 27:25–26).

The incomparable spiritual power and sacred instructions of these four sermons defy simple categorization and analysis. They are charged with long, personal experience and are alive with the Spirit of the Lord—stunning testimonies to the fact that no unschooled farm boy could have ever composed such sublimely simple yet profound verse. Like a spinal cord, the first principles and ordinances of the gospel provide a doctrinal backbone to the book of Mosiah.

Little wonder, then, that two or three years later, when the Prophet was under inspiration revising the

New Testament, he paid careful attention to passages which contained the teachings of these principles. For example, in one of the more confusing biblical passages, Hebrews 6:1, it reads, "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection." Joseph's inspired translation inserts the word *not* before the phrase *leaving the principles*. Of this change he later commented: "If a man leaves the principles of the doctrine of Christ, how can he be saved in the principles? This is a contradiction. I don't believe it. I will render it as it should be—'Therefore not leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.'"⁹

The Prophet further learned through his efforts of translating or revising the Old Testament that these doctrines were even taught in their fulness to Adam and Eve and their descendants (see Moses 6:52–68).

FROM FREQUENT DIVINE INSPIRATION

The first principles and ordinances of the gospel are also found amidst the revelations and instructions given in the Doctrine and Covenants during the early years of the Church. These sacred instructions were received by

the Prophet Joseph in answer to prayer, in times of need.

From a revelatory instruction to the Prophet at Manchester, New York, in March 1830 we read: “Of tenets thou shalt not talk, but thou shalt declare repentance and faith on the Savior, and remission of sins by baptism, and by fire, yea, even the Holy Ghost” (D&C 19:31).

From a revelation given at Fayette, New York, seven months later we read: “Yea, repent and be baptized, every one of you, for a remission of your sins; yea, be baptized even by water, and then cometh the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost.

“Behold, verily, verily, I say unto you, this is my gospel” (D&C 33:11–12).

The glorious vision of the degrees of glory revealed in February 1832 again contains reference to these fundamental doctrines:

“And again we bear record—for we saw and heard, and this is the testimony of the gospel of Christ concerning them who shall come forth in the resurrection of the just—

“They are they who received the testimony of Jesus, and believed on his name and were baptized after the manner of his burial, being buried in the water in his name, and this according to the commandment which he has given—

“That by keeping the commandments they might be washed and cleansed from all their sins, and receive the Holy Spirit by the laying on of the hands of him who is ordained and sealed unto this power;

“And who overcome by faith, and are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, which the Father sheds forth upon all those who are just and true” (D&C 76:50–53).

Little wonder that the Prophet Joseph Smith also taught these principles to those about to depart into their mission fields: “Oh, ye elders of Israel, hearken to my voice; and when you are sent into the world to preach, tell those things you are sent to tell; preach and cry aloud, ‘Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand; repent and believe the Gospel.’ Declare the first principles, and let mysteries alone, lest ye be overthrown.”¹⁰

INDEBTED TO THE PROPHET

President John Taylor summarized well the role of the Prophet Joseph Smith in the restoration of the doctrine on the first principles and ordinances when he said: “To what are we indebted for [this] knowledge? To the administration of an angel, which made manifest the order of God to Joseph Smith, and he revealed it unto others—to that we are indebted for the first principles of the Gospel.”¹¹



In a revelation given at Fayette, New York, the Lord taught, “Yea, repent and be baptized, every one of you, for a remission of your sins” (D&C 33:11).

Since the Prophet Joseph Smith’s time, every President of the Church has taught the central place these principles and ordinances hold, including President Hinckley: “To me the gospel is not a great mass of theological jargon. It is a simple and beautiful and logical thing, with one quiet truth following another in orderly sequence. . . . God has revealed in this dispensation a great and marvelous and beautiful plan that motivates men and women to love their Creator and their Redeemer, to appreciate and serve one another, to walk in faith on the road that leads to immortality and eternal life.”¹²

They are simple and beautiful truths and, when lived to their fulness, will ever distinguish the gospel of Jesus Christ from any other religion or philosophy upon the earth and will identify the humble obedience of His followers. □

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Gospel topics: restoration, Joseph Smith, faith, repentance, baptism, Holy Ghost

NOTES

1. *Deseret News Weekly*, 23 Nov. 1865, 50.
2. Said President Brigham Young of the foreordination of the Prophet Joseph Smith: “It was decreed in the counsels of eternity, long before the foundations of the earth were laid, that he should be the man, in the last dispensation of this world, to bring forth the word of God to the people, and receive the fulness of the keys and power of the Priesthood of the Son of God” (*Deseret News Weekly*, 20 July 1850, 44).
3. *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* (1997), 188.
4. *Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. (1939), 484.
5. *Messenger and Advocate*, Oct. 1834, 16.
6. For further information on the timing of the receipt of the Melchizedek Priesthood from Peter, James, and John, see Larry C. Porter, “The Restoration of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods,” *Ensign*, Dec. 1996, 30–47.
7. *History of the Church*, 1:78.
8. Lucy Mack Smith, *The Revised and Enhanced History of Joseph Smith by His Mother*, ed. Scot Facer Proctor and Maurine Jensen Proctor (1996), 165.
9. *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith (1976), 328.
10. *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 292.
11. *Deseret News Weekly*, 6 July 1895, 65.
12. *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley*, 242.

LET’S TALK ABOUT IT

Most Ensign articles can be used for family home evening discussions. These questions are for that purpose or for personal reflection:

1. Who taught me or members of my family the first principles and ordinances of the gospel? Why are these principles and ordinances essential?
2. Who were some of the heavenly messengers who taught Joseph Smith about the first principles? Which books in the Book of Mormon are especially helpful in understanding them? Which sections of the Doctrine and Covenants teach about these principles?

"That I May Heal You"

President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, assures us: "The gospel teaches us that relief from torment and guilt can be earned through repentance. Save for those few who defect to perdition . . . , there is no habit, no addiction, no rebellion, no transgression, no offense exempted from the promise of complete forgiveness" ("The Brilliant Morning of Forgiveness," *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 19).

SIN SEPARATES US FROM GOD

Unrepented sin separates us from our loving Father in Heaven, leaving us feeling guilty and ashamed. Like physical pain, this "godly sorrow" (2 Cor. 7:10) signals that something is wrong, that we need to pull away from whatever is causing the pain and seek the healing help of the Savior's Atonement.

President Packer explains: "When the prophet Alma was young, he spent such a time 'racked,' as he said, 'with eternal torment, [his] soul . . . harrowed up to the greatest degree' [Alma 36:12; emphasis added].

"He even thought, 'Oh, . . . that I could be banished and become extinct both soul and body' [v. 15; emphasis added].

"But his mind caught hold of a thought. When he nurtured the thought and acted upon it, the morning of forgiveness came. . . .

"The thought that rescued Alma, when he acted upon it,

is this: Restoring what you cannot restore, healing the wound you cannot heal, fixing that which you broke and you cannot fix is the very purpose of the atonement of Christ" (*Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 19–20).

"HE ACCEPTED OUR REPENTANCE"

A priesthood leader was impressed by the "gospel glow" he saw in a sister he was interviewing. When he asked her what the secret of her inner peace was, with moist eyes she replied simply, "Repentance."

She explained she had married young—and pregnant. Sorrow for her sin was followed by confession

to the Lord and to priesthood authorities and an intense commitment to be obedient to the Lord's commandments.

"It was hard, and I certainly wouldn't recommend it to anyone," she explained. "But Heavenly Father blessed us to make something good out of something bad. The more we struggled to be faithful, the stronger Heavenly Father made us. And the stronger Heavenly Father made us, the easier it was to be faithful." In time, this woman, her husband, and their baby entered the temple and were sealed as an eternal family.

Through repentance and the healing power of the Atonement, a young family became worthy to be sealed in the temple.



Experiencing tears of sorrow and tears of joy, this sister and her husband found forgiveness and peace in the Healer's touch. "Now it just amazes me to think of how happy we are as a family," she said. "The Lord could have given up on us. But he accepted our repentance, and . . . helped us make something wonderful out of our lives. Isn't that amazing?" (quoted in Joseph Walker, "Singing the Song of Redeeming Love," *Ensign*, Mar. 1993, 60).

Jeremiah once lamented, "Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there?" (Jer. 8:22). For those who will partake, there is balm—the amazing gift of the Atonement. And the Physician pleads, "Will ye not now return unto me, and repent of your sins, and be converted, that I may heal you?" (3 Ne. 9:13). □

Gospel topics: repentance, Atonement

How can our family take advantage of what is available on the Internet while avoiding objectionable material and people of questionable character?

Response by William C.

Porter, an associate professor of communications at Brigham Young University and high priests group leader in the Orem Utah Cherry Hill Third Ward.

A computer and a telephone line provide the doorway to an online world of libraries, museums, businesses, schools, and, most of all, people—people all over the world willing to talk to you. Via the Internet, you and your children can find answers to those homework questions in an encyclopedia that you can't afford for your home. You can study, on your own computer

Parents need to help children enjoy the many benefits of the Internet but avoid the real dangers and spiritual perils as well. Self-discipline is always the most effective protection.



PHOTO © DIGITAL STOCK

screen, brilliant, colorful images of the world's great art. You can take classes. You can browse catalogs, buy airline tickets, and reserve hotel rooms. You can find people who share your interests, and you can correspond easily with extended family and new-found friends. The Internet is an exciting place.

However, parts of that online world are dangerous. Some Internet neighborhoods attract people and businesses you and your family need to avoid. Some people will want to steal your money and threaten your safety. Without parental guidance and supervision, children can put themselves in physical danger or encounter materials that are spiritual and intellectual poison.

Three things can help protect your family against the dangerous areas of the online world:

- Parental awareness
- Family rules
- Filtering

Parents need to make online use a family, not a private, activity. Put the computer in a room that the whole family uses, not in a child's bedroom. Be aware of when and how your child uses the computer. Take time to learn how to use the Internet yourself. This can help make you aware of what your child is doing and will give you the vocabulary you need to talk to your child about the Internet.

Most parents are challenged to keep up with their children's

abilities to use electronic equipment. If one of your children already knows how to get on the Internet and use it, have that child teach you. You can explore that exciting new world together while you learn. If nobody in your family has computer skills, take a class at a nearby school or library. You need to learn enough to recognize what your child is doing. You may need to work to feel confident on the Internet, but you probably know people who can help you.

Family rules about computer use are essential. It is important that you and your family members agree on the who, how, when, and what of computer use. Parents should help children learn to protect themselves when dealing with other people online. One of the best sets of personal protection rules is found in the *Boy Scout Handbook* on page 15. These rules about safe online correspondence are part of a larger Youth Protection section in the front of the book. The computer rules deal with things such as:

- Telling parents about conversations with strangers or other online experiences.
- Not revealing personal information online.
- Never agreeing to meet an online acquaintance in person or by telephone without parental permission.
- Recognizing that people online may not be who they say they are.

In addition to teaching your children such rules for personal safety, you will need to stress the importance of immediately turning away from anything that makes them uncomfortable and anything sexual while exploring Internet sites.

You can keep some objectionable Internet material off your computer by filtering. Filtering blocks access to Internet sites with content that falls into certain categories such as sexually explicit material, violence, hate speech, gambling, and drugs/alcohol/tobacco. You can do the filtering yourself using personal filtering software, or you can subscribe to an Internet service provider that filters the Internet before it gets to your home.

Personal filtering software is available in stores or can be purchased on the Internet and downloaded into your computer. After you load the program into your computer, you can set it to block standard categories of content or you can customize most programs to screen things that you personally find objectionable. Most programs allow standard filters to be fine-tuned to eliminate specific sites that you want to keep out of your home.

Content can also be filtered by the company that provides your connection to the Internet. It works much the same way as personal filtering, except on a larger scale. With an Internet service provider that offers filtering, all subscribers are usually able to report sites that slip through the



It is best to put the computer in a room the whole family uses, not in a child's bedroom.

filter and have those sites considered for blocking out. Usually, reporting an objectionable site is as simple as clicking on an electronic button and filling in some blanks. However, reporting a site does not guarantee that it actually will be filtered out. If you already subscribe to an Internet service, you can ask whether content is filtered. If you are considering connecting to the Internet, you may want to look for a service provider that filters. Promotional literature or a telephone call will tell you which companies do this.

If your child uses the Internet at school, the content is usually filtered. However, at a public library the content may not be filtered. Schools have an obligation to protect children, but the community resource role of

public libraries and the diversity of interests among patrons may make it difficult for librarians to restrict access to information, even for children. You will want to check what is available to your child wherever he or she uses the Internet, including in the homes of friends. If help is needed in addition to filtering, software is available that tracks Internet usage

and reports to you via a quick review of images recently downloaded from the Internet.

The Internet appears destined to become more and more a part of everyday life, in and out of the Church. Parents need to help children enjoy the many benefits but avoid the real dangers. Adults need to be careful of the spiritual perils as well. Self-discipline is always the most effective protection. When we ignore the urge to satisfy curiosity about things the world may consider acceptable, we build strength to resist temptation and show that we value gospel standards. This example can help our children apply righteous standards for judging what is good and worthwhile as they mature and move increasingly in worldly environments outside our homes. □

Gospel topics: child rearing, moral purity, pornography

THE LATTER-DAY SAINT

Humanitarian Center

The product of this high-volume enterprise is service—worldwide.

You may already know that the Church often sends clothing and other supplies to disaster victims and those in need. But have you ever wondered where those shipments come from and how they're put together?

The answers are found at the Latter-day Saint Humanitarian Center in Salt Lake City.

The shipments are made possible through donations of several kinds.

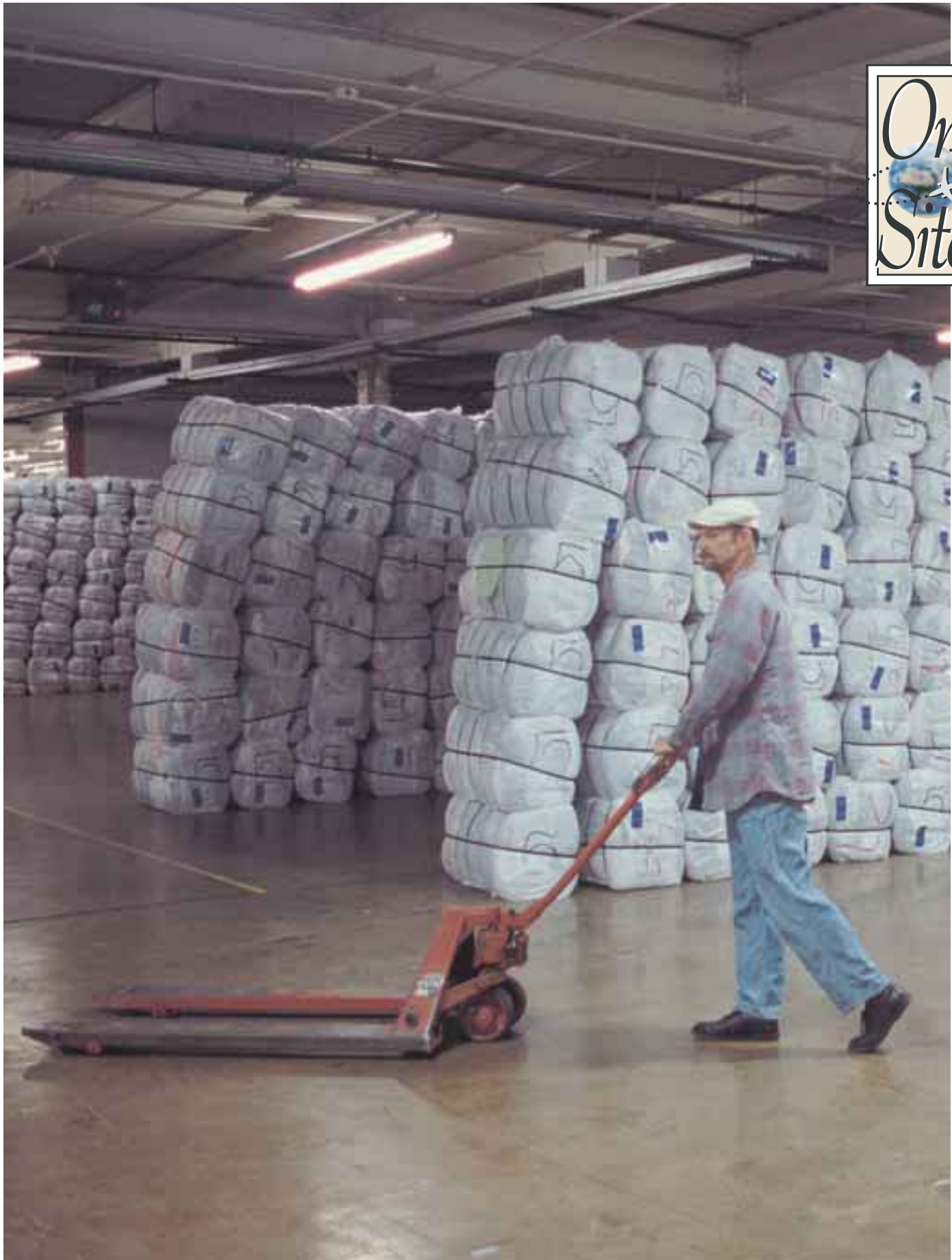
- Deseret Industries is a thrift store and rehabilitation center with 49 stores in the western United States. When Deseret Industries receives more clothing than needed for its sales floors, it ships the surplus to the humanitarian center, where it is sorted and baled for shipment.

- Companies and institutions also make donations—medical equipment and supplies, computer equipment, elementary school texts (from school districts and publishers), and used materials that would otherwise be scrapped. For example, fabric seat covers donated by a major airline are made into bags that are filled with basic school supplies for students who could not afford them—pencils, paper, and a writing slate. These school kits are shipped to schools around the world.

- Many donations come from individuals. Most are handmade items—baby clothes for newborn kits, leper bandages, toys, quilts, hospital gowns for children. Some donate wheelchairs, crutches, or walkers that are no longer needed. Medical supplies and computer parts have been donated in large quantities;



Above: Miriam Dekoundam, from Chad, sorts some of the millions of pounds of clothing that come through the Humanitarian Center each year. Right: Stacked bales of clothing await shipment. Left: Shrink-wrapped modules of boxed medical supplies are ready to be sent out at a moment's notice. Below left: Missionaries and workers at the Humanitarian Center box up school kits, each filled with basic supplies for one elementary student, that will be shipped to schools throughout the world.



often members who know of their availability have put donors in contact with the Church.

- Humanitarian aid funds donated by members are used to buy some basic medical and hygiene supplies that don't come in as donations.

Prepackaged shipments of basic medical and hygiene supplies and equipment are stored on pallets at the Humanitarian Center, ready to be loaded onto a truck and sent out at a moment's notice, just like the bales of clothing or boxes of books.

There is one other impressive aspect of the Latter-day Saint Humanitarian Center: while it is serving people in distant parts of the world, it also provides employment and job training for 130-40 workers at any given time, many of them refugees from other countries. □



Above: Hygiene materials, items for newborns, and rolled leper bandages donated by members. Below: Navy Tim Johnson packs school supplies into school kit bags made from airline seat covers.



Top: Donated books await sorting and packaging for shipment. Above: Handmade quilts, afghans, and comforters donated by members go out in Humanitarian Center shipments and often become treasured necessities for displaced victims of disaster or war.





Above: Crutches and walkers, some awaiting refurbishing, go out quickly when there is need for an emergency medical shipment. Far right, bottom: Donated wheelchairs have proved to be blessings for the needy in many parts of the world. Far right, center: Leonor Abed inspects hygiene kits assembled by Church members and groups. Right: Donated medical equipment often includes sophisticated machinery like these incubators for newborns.



Selections from Addresses of President Gordon B. Hinckley



BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST

“Believe in Jesus Christ, our Savior and our Redeemer, the Son of God, who came to earth and walked the dusty roads of Palestine—the Son of God—to teach us the way of truth and light and salvation, and who, in one great and glorious act offered an atonement for each of us. He opened the way of salvation and exaltation for each of us, under which we may go forward in the Church and kingdom of God. Be not faithless, but believe in the great and wonderful and marvelous blessings of the Atonement” (meeting, Burlington, Vermont, 14 Oct. 1998).

SACRAMENT

“I hope that once in a while outside of the walls of the chapel we think of the meaning of the sacrament and of the obligations which are repayable in partaking of it. It is a sacred and marvelous

and wonderful thing and represents for us the life and the gift of the Son of God” (sacrament meeting, Monument Park [Utah] Ninth Ward, 20 Dec. 1998).

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

“Under the plan of heaven, the husband and the wife walk side by side as companions, neither one ahead of the other, but a daughter of God and a son of God walking side by side. Let your families be families of love and peace and happiness. Gather your children around you and have your family home evenings, teach your children the ways of the Lord, read to them from the scriptures, and let them come to know the great truths of the eternal gospel as set forth in these words of the Almighty” (fireside, Buenos Aires, Argentina, 12 Nov. 1996).

REVERENCE

“We need to cultivate a spirit of reverence among our people, particularly our younger people who have become very careless in their behavior, their demeanor. Let us work on this very, very important matter so that when we enter the chapel we enter with a feeling that we are walking on sacred ground, that this is the place where the sacrament is administered. This is the place where the word of God is taught. This is the place where we ought to solemnly contemplate the things of heaven, as well as the things of earth. Let there be developed in the hearts and the

minds of our young people a greater attitude of reverence. Let there be quieter talk in the houses of the Lord. Let us be known as a reverent people” (solemn assembly, Salt Lake Temple, 19 Apr. 1998).

WE LIVE IN A COMPLEX TIME

“We live in a very complex time in the history of the world. We are subjected to all kinds of influences that come into our living rooms and speak to us and beckon us to do things that we shouldn’t do. It takes self-discipline, faith, courage, and vision to go forward. And you do that. We love you for the strength and goodness of your lives” (fireside, Sydney, Australia, 14 May 1997).

WE ARE A BIBLICAL CHURCH

“We are sometimes told that we are not a biblical church. We *are* a biblical church. This wonderful testament of the Old World, this great and good Holy Bible is one of our standard works. We teach from it. We bear testimony of it. We read from it. It strengthens our testimony. And we add to that this great second witness, the Book of Mormon, the testament of the New World, for as the Bible says, ‘In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall [all things] be established’” (2 Cor. 13:1) (Atlanta, Georgia, regional conference, 17 May 1998).

HUMILITY

“Be humble. There is no place for arrogance in our lives. There is no place for conceit in our lives. There is no place for egotism in our lives. We have work to do. We have things to accomplish. . . . ‘Be thou humble; and the Lord thy God shall lead thee by the hand, and give thee answer to thy prayers’ (D&C 112:10). People ask me what is my favorite scripture, and I say I

have many of them. But that is one of them. 'Be thou humble; and the Lord thy God shall lead thee by the hand, and give thee answer to thy prayers'" (meeting with Spokane, Washington, youth and young single adults, 22 Aug. 1999).

VIRTUE AND CLEANLINESS

"Believe in virtue. Believe in cleanliness of thought, mind, word, and deed. Stay away from the great and terrible flood of pornography that is sweeping across the earth and makes a few men rich while it destroys many others who become enslaved to it. Stay away from it" (meeting, Baltimore, Maryland, 15 Nov. 1998).

TEMPLE WORK

"The vicarious service to the dead is the most unselfish service of any that I know of in this life, where no one comes with any expectation of thanks for the work which he or she does. Every time you come to the temple, you will be a better man or woman when you leave than you were when you came. I believe that with all my heart. Redouble your efforts and your faithfulness in going to the temple . . . and the Lord will bless you, and you will be happier" (regional conference, Oahu, Hawaii, 23 Jan. 2000).

LIVE THE GOSPEL

"Live the gospel. Live the gospel. That's my counsel to the [members of the] Church. Live the gospel. Look to God and live. That's the sum and substance. Look to God and live" (interview with *Deseret News*, 25 Feb. 2000).

PRIESTHOOD OF GOD

"In this Church every worthy man may hold the priesthood of God. Every worthy man may speak in the name of God, the

Lord, even the Savior of the world. Every man may serve in the governance of the Church. Every man may place his hands upon the heads of his wife and children and bless them. What a marvelous thing it is. What a great thing we have to offer the world" (meeting, Singapore, 30 Jan. 2000).

BE GOOD NEIGHBORS

"[The Lord] expects we will be good neighbors, kind to others, to those not of our faith, that we will treat them with generosity and love and respect, that when they have troubles, we will reach out to assist them and lift them and help and bless them.

"Jesus was asked what is the first and great law in the kingdom? And He said, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, [might, mind, and soul]. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself' (Matt. 22:37-39). Now that isn't easy to do; it is not easy to do, but we must work at it and work at it constantly. We must reach out to assist others, and their respect and appreciation for this Church will grow as we do so. The God of Heaven expects us to be helpful to others, to be good neighbors, to be friends to all within our reach" (meeting, Guam, 31 Jan. 2000).

CONVERT RETENTION

"I think the Lord would be very pleased if we would get on our knees, each of us, and pray to Him and ask Him to help us bring someone into this Church. And then when that occurs, you stay so very close to that individual until he or she becomes well grounded in the faith so that there will be no falling away after they've come into the Church" (regional conference, Oahu, Hawaii, 22 Jan. 2000).

PUT RETURNED MISSIONARIES TO WORK

"I am satisfied that if every returning missionary had a meaningful responsibility the day he or she came home, we'd have fewer of them grow cold in their faith. I wish that you would make an effort to see that every returned missionary receives a meaningful assignment. Activity is the nurturing process of faithfulness" (Smithfield-Logan, Utah, regional conference, priesthood leadership meeting, 20 Apr. 1996).

TESTIMONY OF THE RESTORATION

"Remember that God is in His heaven, that He is your Father and my Father and that He is the Father of His Only Begotten Son in the flesh, the Lord Jesus Christ, who lived and died for each of us. And after long generations of apostasy since He was raised from the dead, they, the Father and the Son, have appeared again and parted the curtain in this, the dispensation of the fulness of times, and brought back the ancient priesthood with all its powers and gifts and authority and the true Church of the Lord which carries His holy name, even the name of Jesus Christ, and it is our Father's wish to bless us. He wants us to be happy. He wants us to live well. He desires to bless us. And we must put our trust in Him" (regional conference, Santiago, Chile, 26 Apr. 1999).

THIS IS GOD'S HOLY WORK

"This is God's holy work, restored to earth in this, the dispensation of the fulness of times, to bless us because He loves us, to bring gifts to us, because He wishes to pour out that love upon us. Be faithful. Be true. Be upright. How wonderful it is to be a member of this Church" (meeting, Cairns, Australia, 26 Jan. 2000). □

AREA AUTHORITY SEVENTY IN PERU

“Everything I do or don’t do affects my family relationship enormously,” says **Elder Willy F. Zuzunaga Cavero**, a member of the fourth Quorum of the Seventy from Lima, Peru. “Living the gospel is the key to being happy. I know this because I am experiencing it.”

Elder Zuzunaga, whose parents died when he was a boy, was introduced to the Church at age 23, when a friend invited him to church. “Never has a meeting impressed me as much as that sacrament meeting. I was in church for five hours and didn’t want it to end. I could feel the warmth and love of the members, and I felt important. The Spirit testified to me that the Church was true, but I didn’t understand.”

When the missionaries came to visit he resisted their teachings at first, but they urged him to pray. “After they left I went to my room and pleaded with the Lord: ‘I just want to know if Joseph Smith was a prophet.’” The Holy Ghost then spoke powerfully to Elder Zuzunaga’s mind and heart, replacing all doubt with peace. “As I remember this experience now, I feel as if it had happened yesterday.”

Soon after baptism the bishop encouraged him to think of serving a full-time mission. Nearly a year later Brother Zuzunaga invited his relatives to hear him speak in sacrament meeting prior to his departure to a mission. Thirty of them came and were all later baptized.

Since 1980 Elder Zuzunaga has been a branch, stake, and mission

president. He was a regional representative when called as an Area Authority Seventy in 1998.

“When I was a boy,” Elder Zuzunaga says, “the death of my parents affected me deeply. I missed them and prayed to God for peace and consolation. Sometimes I thought He had forgotten me. I’m grateful to the Lord for sending His missionaries. I know He has not forgotten me.”

MISSIONARIES FROM INDONESIA

As **Edward Adolf Meulemans** of Jakarta, Indonesia, was contemplating his life one evening two years ago, he realized that he had received many blessings from the Lord. He wondered, “What can I give back to Him for everything He has given me?” A prompting came to serve a mission. He and his wife, **Ritschy Adelina Meulemans**, discussed and prayed about the idea and received the answer to serve. Now they are serving a two-year proselyting mission among their own people in the Indonesia Jakarta Mission.

Brother Meulemans was baptized in December 1994, and Sister Meulemans followed soon thereafter. The story of their conversion begins when his parents and sister joined the Church about 30 years ago in Pasadena, California, and invited



the Meulemans to investigate the Church. They declined for many years until in 1994 Brother Meulemans traveled to the United States for a family reunion, where he felt touched by the Spirit and decided to learn more. When he returned to Indonesia, he went to the mission home and asked to be taught the gospel. He met with the mission president for three hours every morning for six days. At first Sister Meulemans did not join the meetings, but by the time he was finished with the discussions she too was ready to study.

Brother and Sister Meulemans are members of the South Jakarta Branch, Jakarta District, where he has served in the branch presidency and she has served in the Relief Society presidency. They are fluent in the Javanese language as well as Indonesian, Dutch, English, and German. They have one daughter and five grandchildren. “Our Heavenly Father is never too late, never too early, but was on time in 1994,” says Brother Meulemans. Now it is time for serving



Elder Zuzunaga, his wife, Hilda, and their four children, Willy David, Danella, Talia, and Angie.

a mission.—**Joan Dixon, Jakarta English Branch, Jakarta Indonesia District**

KOREAN OPERA SINGER

Korean-born baritone **Hans Choi** was only 12 years old when he decided he wanted to be a professional singer. At that time, Western music wasn't readily available in Korea, but after he happened to listen to a couple of old Enrico Caruso records, he knew he wanted to sing opera. Now, over 30 years later, he has gained international acclaim singing in opera houses and recital halls in Europe, Asia, and the United States.

Brother Choi received his first vocal training while a student at Yon Sei University in Seoul. In 1981, though not a Church member, he was invited to be soloist for a Christmas concert with the Korean Mormon Choir. Although he sang regularly for another church, "I was looking for a church and a doctrine I could relate to. When I met the members of the Korean Mormon Choir I felt welcome. Everyone was very kind. Not only did I sing with the choir, I eventually became its director," he said. The assistant director was a young lady named Kyung Shin, who had joined the Church 10 years earlier. With her encouragement, Brother

Choi accepted the missionary discussions and a copy of the Book of Mormon. His commitment to the Church—and to Kyung Shin—deepened, and he was baptized and married in 1982.

Two years later the Korean and Italian governments awarded scholarships to Brother Choi, and the Chois moved to Milan, Italy, where he spent the next few years studying at the Osimo Academy, the Giuseppe Verdi Conservatory, and La Scala Theater Academy. Brother Choi then took first place in the prestigious Verdi Music Competition in Busseto, Italy. "For me, winning the Verdi

Competition marked the beginning of my professional career. . . . The day of the competition I was very nervous. I was afraid. I asked my bishop for a blessing. He told me to have faith in my ability and to have faith in the gift Heavenly Father had given me. I have always tried to follow that counsel. I feel grateful to the Lord every time I sing."

In 1988 Brother Choi accepted an invitation to sing with the Philadelphia Opera Company, and the Choi family moved to the United States. Then in 1990 he

entered the Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow. "I don't think I would have entered the competition without my wife's encouragement. . . . I was the first Korean ever to sing in the competition. I felt proud to be representing my country, and I wanted to do well. I sang four songs in Russian and then others in English, German, French, Spanish, and Korean. As I sang, a feeling of patriotism welled within me and gave me greater confidence." Brother Choi not only won the competition, he became the first to be awarded two gold medals.

His career has included recitals at the Washington D.C. Temple Visitors' Center and the Assembly Hall on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah. He has also been a guest soloist with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. "It was a great honor to be invited to sing with the Tabernacle Choir. It's a memory I shall always cherish."

Intertwined with his professional career is Church service. "My Church membership has never been in conflict with my professional career. People within the music community know and respect the fact that I am a Latter-day Saint." —**Glen Nelson, Manhattan Second Ward, New York New York Stake** □



PHOTO OF PIANO BY ARTVILLE



From the Relief Society General Presidency

The Relief Society's Role in Missionary Work, Retention, and Activation

A Relief Society presidency in an Asian country determined to visit every less-active sister in their ward. It was a daunting task, but they were determined. One visit was to a woman who had joined the Church more than 20 years earlier but had stopped attending shortly thereafter because she found it difficult to make friends and did not feel comfortable. During these years she often found herself thinking about the Church. She believed it to be the Lord's true Church and was delighted to welcome these sisters into her home. She accepted their invitation to come to Relief Society.

President Gordon B. Hinckley has repeatedly pleaded with Church members to become actively involved in missionary work, the retention of new converts, and the activation of less-active members (see "Find the Lambs, Feed the Sheep," *Ensign*, May 1999, 104–10).

As an auxiliary devoted to helping bring sisters and their families to Christ, the Relief Society can help with this effort in simple but profound ways. We invite Relief Society leaders to consider the following possibilities:

- Encourage sisters to cultivate friendships with women not of our faith and sisters new to Church activity.
- Encourage sisters to invite new members and less-active members into their homes.
- Invite sisters to church and make sure they never sit alone.
- Introduce sisters to others.
- Assign faithful visiting teachers to sisters investigating the Church as well as to new members and less-active members.
- Emphasize the valuable impact of visiting teaching.
- Visit every less-active sister in her home.

As sisters, we have special gifts for nurturing others. Is there any service more important than helping another person experience the light and love of the gospel? May we respond to President Hinckley's plea by reaching out to all who fall within our sphere of influence. □

From the Young Women General Presidency

Follow the Prophet and Strengthen the Youth



PHOTO BY JED CLARK

In a remarkable and historic meeting held on 12 November 2000 in the Conference Center in Salt Lake City, President Gordon B. Hinckley spoke in a fireside especially for the youth of the Church. As the meeting began, those assembled in meetinghouses and homes throughout the world united in singing "We thank thee, O God, for a prophet to guide us in these latter days" (*Hymns*, no. 19). And guide, even pray for us, he did. In words clear and inspiring, our prophet instructed us regarding standards for Latter-day Saints. What a tremendous blessing is ours to have a prophet who knows, understands, and cares about youth!

Young Women presidencies and advisers can now turn their attention to supporting President Hinckley's message. Consider the following ideas as you plan to follow the prophet and strengthen the youth under your leadership:

- Discuss President Hinckley's teachings in your presidency meetings and ward or branch councils. Remember the prophet's message concerning youth, and consider how you can involve and support parents (see "Great Shall Be the Peace of Thy Children," *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 50–53; "Your Greatest Challenge, Mother," *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 97–100). Including parents in your efforts will be a great blessing.
- Help the young women respect and honor the prophet and his message through your daily example and the many formal and informal teaching opportunities available to you. Help them have a desire to follow his six "B's."

• Consider assigning youth to give talks during Mutual or Sunday opening exercises focusing on President Hinckley's talk. In planning Mutual and other events, study his prophetic counsel and then help the youth understand how to apply it in their lives.

As we help young women live the prophet's teachings, Heavenly Father will know that we truly are thankful "for a prophet to guide us in these latter days." □



From the Primary General Presidency

Follow the Prophet

Primaries are an opportunity for loving teachers and leaders to teach and testify of Jesus Christ and to reinforce gospel principles taught in the home. To help provide a firm foundation of gospel teachings for children, the Church provides a yearly theme for sharing time and the children's sacrament meeting presentation.

This year the theme is "Follow the Prophet." As leaders and teachers teach this theme in Primary, children will develop a personal testimony of the mission of the prophets, beginning with the Prophet Joseph Smith. President Gordon B. Hinckley has said: "I love the Prophet Joseph Smith! I bear testimony of the divinity of his calling. . . . I thank the Prophet for his testimony, for his work, for his life, for his sacrifice, for his witness of the living reality of God our Eternal Father and the risen Lord Jesus Christ" (quoted in "A Tour of the Joseph Smith Memorial Building," *Ensign*, Sept. 1993, 38).

Knowing that the gospel and the Church were restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith under divine authority will help children understand the importance of prophets and of following the living prophets. As the children memorize the sixth article of faith, they will understand that Heavenly Father organized His Church in the latter days just as He did anciently. And as in ancient times, Heavenly Father guides His Church today through living prophets.

This year, share your testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith often and testify of the importance of sustaining the living prophets. Help the children understand that we follow the prophets today as we:

- Keep Heavenly Father's commandments.
- Heed the prophets' counsel and follow their examples.
- Accept callings and serve faithfully.
- Are kind and reach out to others.

Help children learn that by following the living prophets, they are also following Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.

Note: Information about prophets, including timelines of their lives, is available from Church materials such as the Gospel Art Picture Kit (item no. 34730, U.S. \$25.00).



From the Sunday School General Presidency

Opening the Scriptures

Part of the Savior's greatness as a teacher is captured in the question posed by the two disciples He taught as they walked along the road to Emmaus: "Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?" (Luke 24:32).

A worthy goal for every teacher is to be able to open the scriptures to the members of a Sunday School class so that they are edified by the Spirit and motivated to apply scriptural teachings in their lives. Equally worthwhile is fostering a love for the word of God. A teacher who values the scriptures and consistently teaches from them with enthusiasm and the Spirit can accomplish both aims. A young man who had such a Sunday School teacher said: "I could tell just by the way my teacher held his scriptures and made them come alive as he taught that they meant a great deal to him. It wasn't long before they became very important to me also."

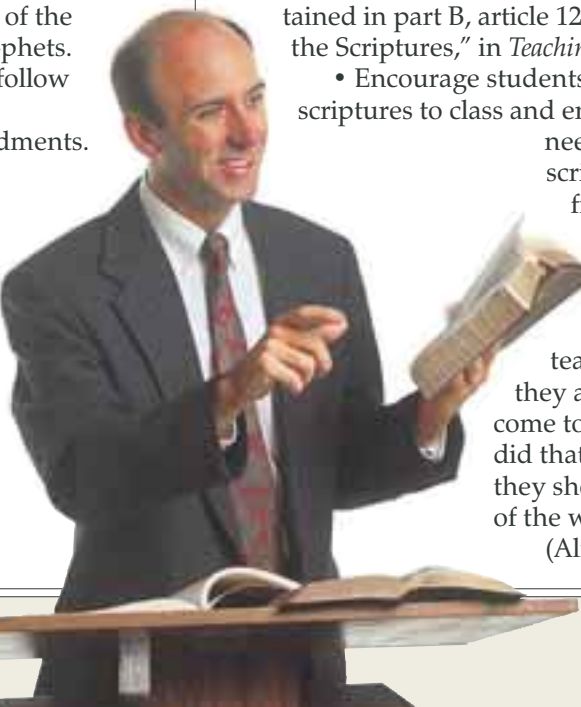
As ward and branch Sunday School presidencies visit classes, counsel with each teacher quarterly, and participate in teacher improvement meetings, they can help teachers learn to teach from the scriptures. Presidencies might consider the following ideas:

- Invite teachers to develop a personal gospel study plan centered on the scriptures as outlined in part A, article 7 of *Teaching, No Greater Call: A Resource Guide for Gospel Teaching*.

- Review with teachers the principles contained in part B, article 12, "Teaching from the Scriptures," in *Teaching, No Greater Call*.

- Encourage students to bring their own scriptures to class and ensure that, when needed and if possible, scriptures are available from the meetinghouse library.

As Sunday School teachers earnestly seek to teach from the scriptures, they and their students will come to understand as Alma did that it is "expedient that they should try the virtue of the word of God" (Alma 31:5). □



Friendshipping Tips

Visiting a less-active member can at times be intimidating. When I received a new visiting teaching route that included a less-active sister, I put the assignment on my refrigerator door, where it stayed for a month while I mustered up the courage to call her. When I finally

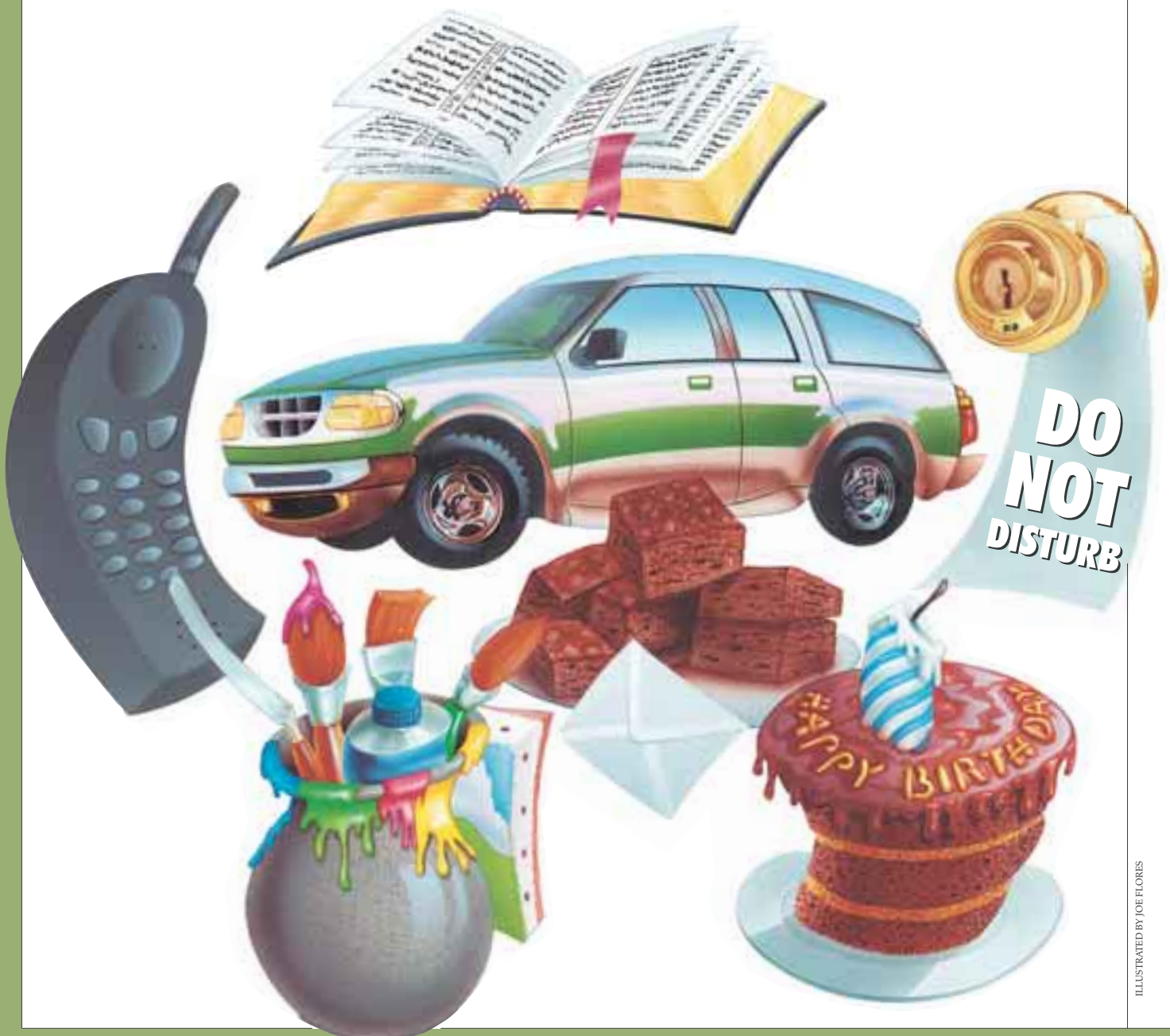
did call, I got a chilly reception.

While I was struggling with this assignment, I happened across a scripture that changed my attitude: “Lovest thou me? . . . Feed my sheep” (John 21:16). I realized that as a disciple of Christ, I needed to reach out to His sheep that have strayed. Instead of thinking of this woman as hostile, I began to think of her as my sister—a child of God—who needed

to be loved back into the fold.

As I visited with this sister, and later with other less-active members, I discovered a number of things that have improved our friendships.

- *Be a true friend.* At first less-active members may act cold toward home or visiting teachers, but don’t give up. As you continue to come by with a smile and show interest in them as you try



ILLUSTRATED BY JOE FLORES



to share a message, they will realize that you are sincere in your offer of friendship.

- *Keep them informed.* Call less-active members and keep them informed of upcoming ward events. While some may not be ready to attend church, they may be willing to join other ward or branch activities.

- *Offer rides.* Invite them to ride with you to ward or stake meetings and events. Arrange for Primary, Scout, or Mutual teachers and advisers to offer rides to family members who may not otherwise be able to attend auxiliary functions. Once they attend, they will likely make friends with other ward members.

- *Bake a treat.* Once, when a sister would not return my calls, I left cookies on her doorstep along with an inspirational message. She called the next day to thank me.

- *When appropriate, share a gospel message.* Some sisters really do long for a spiritual uplift despite their unenthusiastic response. Share a short spiritual message or leave one in a note. Include your testimony of the love Heavenly Father has for her, and include your own feelings of love for her family.

- *Seek common interests.* Invite a sister to go with you to take a class, shop, or attend a sporting or cultural event.

- *Remember special days.* A birthday card or telephone call shows you care, and bringing special treats on holidays can brighten any family's day.

- *Pray for them.* As you remember your less-active sisters in your daily prayers, you'll find you have increased awareness of their needs and new ideas of things you might do that may further soften their hearts.—**Kersten Campbell, College Station Second Ward, College Station Texas Stake**

Family Home Evening Songbooks

A few years ago our ward Primary music leader informed me that my young son was reverent in Primary, but he wasn't singing the songs. I was surprised; I knew he liked to sing. When I asked him why he wasn't participating, he said he didn't know the words. So I decided he needed more reinforcement at home.

I asked the music leader what songs the Primary children were working on. Then I made copies of the songs from the *Children's Songbook* (1989), enclosed them in clear protective sheets, and put them in binders for each family member. During the family home evenings that followed, the family member with the assignment to pick the songs would choose from our songbook.

It worked! This process helped our son learn the Primary songs, and it gave the rest of the family an opportunity to learn them as well.

Because of this successful experiment, our family has continued this each year. In January we ask the music leader what songs are in the new Primary sacrament meeting presentation. Then we add copies of these songs to the front of our songbooks. Even children too young to read can learn the songs when they hear them often.

Primary music leaders may be able to help in this process by regularly providing parents with the names of songs the children are working on. Since many parents do not have copies of the *Children's Songbook*, where possible

music leaders may want to provide copies of the songs for the children to take home.

Keep in mind that due to copyright restrictions, some of the songs in the *Children's Songbook* may not be photocopied; those songs have a notice at the bottom of the page.

Page 301 of the songbook has guidelines and restrictions for copying music.

Parents may also help children learn the songs by using the *Children's Songbook* recordings available through Church distribution centers or by making their own customized tapes of the song.—**Nancy Clemence, Ledgewood First Ward, Morristown New Jersey Stake**



Walking Your Way to Good Health

Several years ago I realized that amidst a busy schedule of family, church, and work activities I was not getting the physical exercise I needed to stay healthy. I sought a beneficial activity I could easily work into my daily routine and found it in something I had been doing all my life: walking.

Walking improves strength and endurance, helps build healthy bones and muscles, helps control weight, reduces anxiety and stress, increases self-confidence, and may improve blood pressure and cholesterol levels. Walking regularly reduces the risk of diseases such as osteoporosis, coronary heart disease, hypertension, colon cancer, and diabetes mellitus. Walking is also often appropriate for people whose condition does not allow them to do more

strenuous physical activities.

The following ideas may help you integrate walking into your everyday life:

- *Walk to church if distances allow.* Plan to leave home a little earlier each Sunday if necessary.
- *If possible, walk to work or your source of transportation.* In addition to starting your workday on the right "foot," you will save money on travel and parking costs.
- *If you ride to work, park your car or get off the bus a few blocks early.* This will give you a few valuable minutes of exercise even if your trip is too far to walk all the way.
- *Walk children to a nearby school instead of driving them.* This can teach them good habits about active living and will help reduce traffic congestion near the school. Babies in strollers can go along too.
- *Walk to a local store instead of driving to a bigger one farther away.* Reduced transportation costs in some cases make up for higher prices at a smaller store.
- *Take a walk at lunchtime or on*

a break. You will find yourself refreshed and more alert afterward.

- *If your health permits, climb stairs instead of using an elevator.* Do not overdo it; climb an appropriate number of stairs for your age and condition.

- *Turn off the television and take a walk for recreation.* The world around you is glorious and full of amazing details only evident when you pass by at a walking pace.

- *Find a walking partner.* Go for walks with people you want to spend time with.

- *If you are planning a move, consider a location within walking distance of your most frequent destinations* (for example, church, school, workplace, grocery store).

Walking affords time to think, unwind, or spend time with others while providing the moderate physical activity that increases personal fitness.—**Erik Backstrom, Connors Hill Ward, Edmonton Alberta Bonnie Doon Stake**

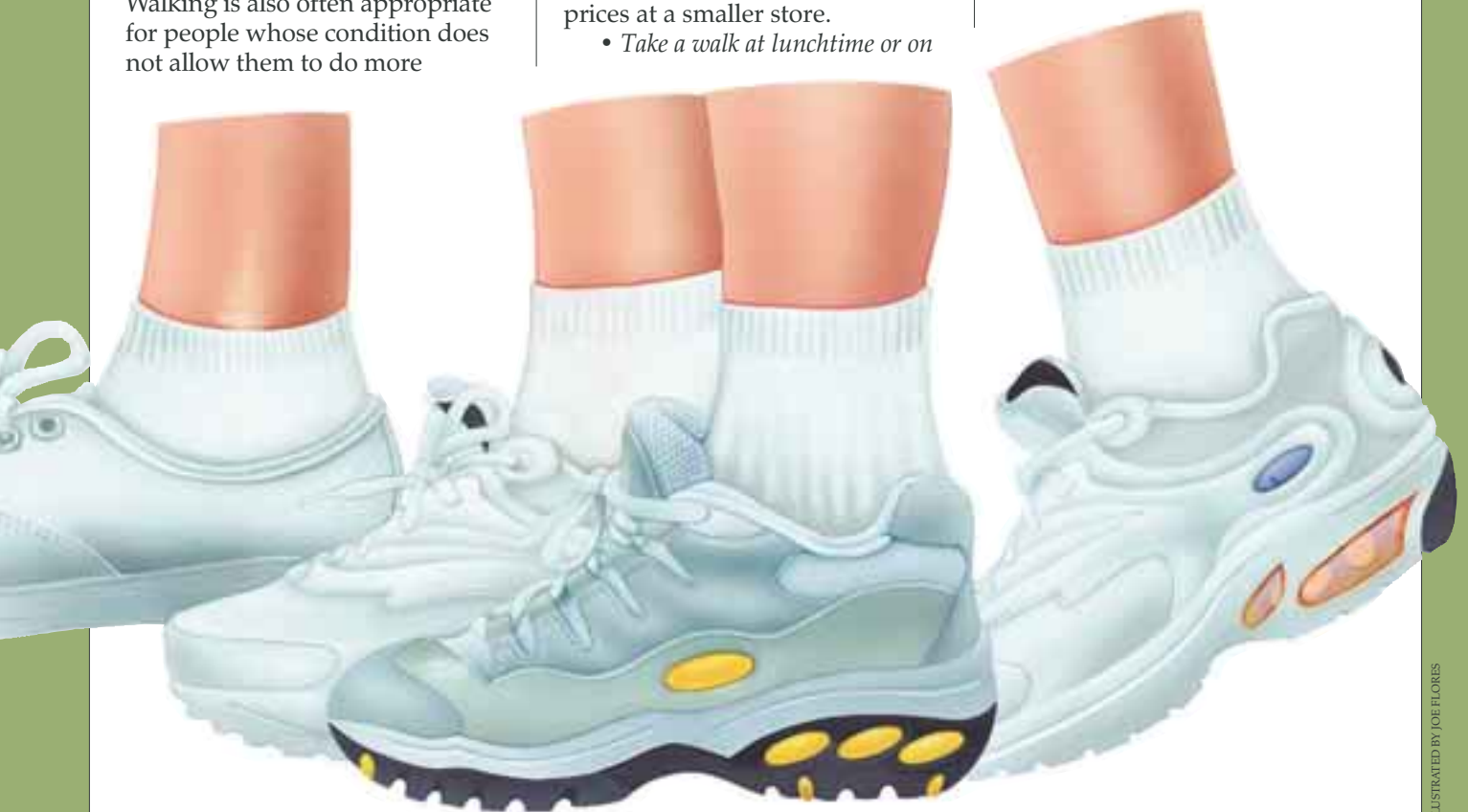




PHOTO BY CLEMSON CAMPOS

The new Recife temple, located in northern Brazil, attracted more than 78,000 to its open house. The temple became the first to be dedicated in Brazil since the São Paulo temple was completed in 1978.

Two Brazilian Temples Dedicated

President Gordon B. Hinckley, assisted by President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, recently dedicated the Recife Brazil Temple and the Porto Alegre Brazil Temple. The temples were the last to be dedicated in 2000, a year of remarkable temple building.

The two temple dedications were especially meaningful for President Faust, who served as a young missionary in Brazil from 1939 to 1942. At that time there were about 800 members in this South American nation. Today, Brazilian Church membership has swelled to some 800,000.

During the same trip, President Hinckley and President Faust also spoke to congregations in Puerto Rico and in Panama.

RECIFE BRAZIL TEMPLE

President Hinckley and President Faust each conducted two sessions of the Recife temple dedication on 15 December. In the dedicatory prayer they petitioned, "Smile with favor upon this great nation of Brazil, where Thy work has grown in a remarkable and wonderful way. Prosper its economy. May peace prevail throughout the land. May Thy messengers, the missionaries, be welcomed here; and may their labors be exceedingly fruitful."

The two First Presidency members were accompanied by Elder Claudio R. M. Costa, Elder Robert S. Wood, and Elder Darwin B. Christenson of the Seventy, members of the Brazil North Area Presidency.

More than 7,000 members attended the dedication of the Recife Brazil Temple, the first to be completed in Brazil since the São Paulo temple was dedicated 22 years ago. The Recife temple will serve 137,500 members in 39 stakes and five districts in northern Brazil. Many of these members have not been able to make the cost-prohibitive, 72-hour trip to São Paulo.

The exquisite new temple, with its surrounding gardens, fruit trees, and palm trees,

attracted 78,386 people to its open house, held 11 November through 2 December. Thousands of these visitors were members of other faiths and less-active members.

"We believe that the Church here is going to become stronger, given the number of nonmember families who asked to learn more about the Church and the number of less-active members who expressed their desire to return to activity after the open house," said Cleto Oliveira, a local public affairs representative.

PORTO ALEGRE BRAZIL TEMPLE

The Porto Alegre temple was dedicated on 17 December, the 102nd operating temple of the Church and the last to be dedicated in 2000. "Bless in ever-increasing numbers



Church leaders and members participate in the cornerstone ceremony for the Porto Alegre temple.

PHOTO COURTESY OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT



President Hinckley and President Faust meet members in Puerto Rico.

the Saints of this temple district that they may qualify and keep themselves worthy to serve in Thy house. . . . We invoke Thy blessings on this great nation of Brazil," said President Hinckley in the dedicatory prayer.

President Hinckley and President Faust were joined at the dedicatory services by Elder J. Kent Jolley, Elder Athos M. Amorim, and Elder Adhemar Damiani of the Seventy, members of the Brazil South Area Presidency.

More than 7,500 Latter-day Saints attended the dedication of the temple, which is located in an attractive neighborhood on a sloping hill overlooking the city. The temple will serve 58,000 members in 27 stakes and four districts in southern Brazil. The temple's 2-9 December open house drew more than 25,000 visitors.

During the dedicatory services, President Faust said that when he arrived in Porto Alegre as a missionary, there were only six Church members in the entire city. Among those members was the young Olga Bing Biehl, who had been baptized on 17 December 1938.

As she and her husband attended the Porto Alegre temple dedication exactly 62 years to the day after her baptism, Sister Biehl expressed joy and wonder that a temple had been built in her city.

PUERTO RICO MEMBER MEETING

President Hinckley's stop in San Juan on 13 December en route to Brazil marked the first time he had visited Puerto Rico. About 3,300 members, some who had traveled from as far as the U.S. Virgin Islands, assembled in a coliseum to hear the words of President Hinckley and President

Faust. Also speaking were Elder Richard D. Allred and Elder Gordon T. Watts of the Seventy, President and First Counselor of the North America Southeast Area Presidency, and Dean M. Davies, president of the Puerto Rico San Juan Mission.

President Hinckley bore testimony of Jesus Christ, the Prophet Joseph Smith, and the Restoration. "I hope and pray that you will remember this meeting when you heard me stand before you and declare my testimony of the truth of this great cause and kingdom. God our Eternal Father lives. Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God."

He also urged members to live worthy to attend the temple. "I say to every man and woman here tonight, live for the day when you can go to the house of the Lord. You must do it; the gospel is not complete without the ordinances of the temple."

President Faust petitioned for more full-time missionaries, asking mothers to prepare their sons

for missionary service. "It was the faith [my mother] instilled in young hearts that caused all five Faust sons to serve missions and be married in the temple," he said.

PANAMA MEMBER MEETING

Some 4,500 members gathered at a convention center in Panama City to see and hear Church leaders speak on 18 December. President Hinckley and President Faust were joined by Elder Lynn G. Robbins of the Seventy, President of the Central America Area, and by Duane B. Williams, president of the Panama Panama City Mission.

During his address, President Hinckley spoke on the importance of tithing, saying that if the members would pay their tithing and demonstrate their faith, "we will find a way to build a temple here."

President Faust spoke about being born again and making the covenants of baptism. He concluded with his testimony of the Savior. □



Some 4,500 Church members respond with joy to President Hinckley's wave of good-bye after a recent address in Panama City. "We will find a way to build a temple here," he told them.

PHOTO COURTESY AP/WORLD WIDE PHOTOS



TABERNACLE CHOIR SINGS IN U.S. INAUGURAL PARADE—"God bless you," U.S. President George W. Bush called out to members of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir as they performed in the presidential inauguration parade on 20 January. The more than 300-voice choir rode on a 125-foot long float. This is the sixth time the choir has sung at U.S. inaugurations; earlier performances include those for Lyndon Johnson in 1965, Richard Nixon in 1969 and 1973, Ronald Reagan in 1981, and George Bush in 1989. The choir also provided free concerts on 19 and 21 January and broadcast its weekly Music and the Spoken Word program on 21 January at George Mason University's Center for the Arts Concert Hall.

President Hinckley Among Most Admired Men

In a Gallup Poll released 29 December, President Gordon B. Hinckley was named by Americans as one of the most admired men in the world.

In an annual national survey, the Gallup Organization asked U.S. adults to name the single man, currently living anywhere in the world, that they admire most. President Hinckley was one of 16 men named as most admired. □

New CES Manuals on Pearl of Great Price, Family History

The Church recently released new Church Educational System manuals on the Pearl of Great Price and family history research.

The *Pearl of Great Price Student Manual, Religion 327* (item no. 35852, U.S. \$2.00) provides commentary, insights, charts, and additional resources on the books of Moses and Abraham and the writings of the Prophet Joseph Smith. It is the first Church-published manual on the Pearl of Great Price in more than 30 years.

The *Introduction to Family History Student*

Manual, Religion 261 (item no. 36405; \$1.50) has been revised for use with Windows applications in Personal Ancestral File, TempleReady, and the

Family History Library Catalog. The new manual has user-friendly instructions for using other basics of the FamilySearch™ program. It does not deal with Internet use.

To order the new materials, contact your local distribution center or visit the official Church Web site at www.lds.org. □



Recently released CES manuals on the Pearl of Great Price and on FamilySearch.

PHOTO BY NEX WALKER



Just hours after receiving the first Amharic copy of the Book of Mormon in Ethiopia, President Gemechu Wariyo Goja of the Addis Ababa Branch shares the book with his family. "It is wonderful," he said.

Another Milestone of 100 Reached in 2000

By Barbara Jean Jones
Assistant Editor

Mention reaching a milestone of 100 in the year 2000, and most Latter-day Saints think of temples. The dedication of the Church's 100th operating temple last October was heralded with much rejoicing and publicity.

What may be a surprise for many is that another historic landmark of 100 was also reached in 2000, an event that occurred quietly. On 29 December 2000, translations of the Book of Mormon in Eastern Armenian, Amharic (spoken in Ethiopia and Eritrea), Latvian, Lithuanian, and Xhosa (spoken in South Africa), rolled off the press, bringing to 100 the number of language translations ever completed. Sixty-one of these are full translations of the Book of Mormon; 39 are translations of selected chapters.

The translation of the Book of Mormon into 100 languages, like the availability of 100 temples, is blessing the lives of people throughout the world.

"I'll never forget the tears of joy shed by the

faithful members here upon receiving this wonderful book in their mother tongue," said Elder Josh White, speaking of the arrival early in 2000 of the translated Book of Mormon in Estonia, where

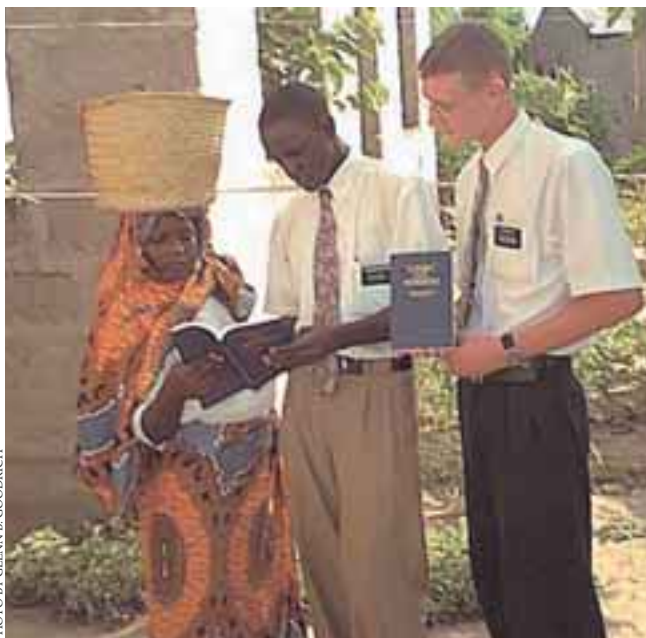


PHOTO BY GLENN R. GOODRICH

"I can't believe I can read the Book of Mormon now!" said Tanzanian investigator Hilda Charles after receiving the book in Swahili.

he is serving a mission. "I'll never take this book of such great worth for granted again."

Mari Timakov of the Tartu Branch, Tallinn Estonia District, a convert of seven years, explained her feelings about reading the book for the first time in her native language, "I have been waiting for the day I could read the Book of Mormon in Estonian. Holding it in your hand, its pages covered with divine counsel, all in your mother tongue—that is something else!"

From Estonia to Ethiopia, the joy of receiving the Book of Mormon in one's own language is the same. "Today I became the first Ethiopian member to receive the Book of Mormon in Amharic, and I am very, very happy," said Gemechu Wariyo Goja, Addis Ababa Branch president, speaking in January 2001. "When I distributed the first copies to members who I worked with in translating the book, everyone cheered and jumped up and down. I just brought my own copy home, and my family is anxiously gathered around the book, reading it to each other in Amharic. It is wonderful."

Dominique Andriamanantoa, president of the newly created Antananarivo Madagascar Stake—the first stake to be created in the island nation of Madagascar—says he has already seen a difference in the local membership since the release of the Malagasy Book of Mormon in February 2000.

"We had retention problems before, but now more

people are better converted because their testimonies can be grounded in the Book of Mormon," says President Andriamanantoa. He also says that local leadership has become stronger and more members are participating in Church meetings because people are reading and understanding the doctrine of the Book of Mormon.

Sister Timakov says it's the same in Estonia: "Now, we can just open the book and read or use verses in our talks. We can enjoy the sound of the teachings when it is read out loud in Sunday School. We can hand it to people who years ago would have just said, 'Sorry, I don't understand any language but Estonian.' It is a blessing to cherish."

And in Tanzania, where the full Book of Mormon translation in Swahili was released last fall, President William Gideme of the Chang'ombe Branch says, "Finally I can read the Book of Mormon to my whole family with complete understanding. I am so grateful."

The translation of the Book of Mormon into so many languages also promises to increase missionary success in areas where the book was not available to investigators before. "I can't believe I can read the Book of Mormon now! I am very happy about that," says Hilda Charles, an investigator who has been attending the Chang'ombe Branch.

One missionary serving in Ethiopia told President Gemechu, "We are going to be much busier now." □

LDS Scene



PHOTO BY RUSSELL TAYLOR, BEEHIVE NEWSPAPER

Judge Lloyd D. George stands in front of a new U.S. courthouse recently named after him.

U.S. COURTHOUSE NAMED AFTER LDS JUDGE

A new federal courthouse was recently named after Judge Lloyd D. George, a member of the Las Vegas Sixth Ward, Las Vegas Nevada Stake, who served as the Chief Judge of the U.S. District Court for the District of Nevada for five years. The Lloyd D. George United States Courthouse was dedicated in a ceremony that honored Brother George for his years of service since he was appointed to a federal judgeship in 1984.

GARY CROWTON NAMED BYU HEAD FOOTBALL COACH

Gary Crowton has been chosen as the new head football coach at Brigham Young University, replacing retiring head coach LaVell Edwards. Elder Merrill J. Bateman of the Seventy, BYU president,

presented the new coach at a recent press conference.

Brother Crowton comes to BYU from his position as offensive coordinator for the U.S. National Football League's Chicago Bears. He was born in Provo, Utah, and grew up in nearby Orem. He served a mission to South Korea from 1979 to 1981.

BYU-TV NOW CARRIED ON DIRECTV

Brigham Young University Television is now being carried on DIRECTV, the

largest satellite television broadcaster in the U.S., viewed in nine million homes.

BYU Television is a non-commercial channel that broadcasts BYU sports and devotionals and concerts provided by the university and the Church. The channel also broadcasts lectures from Education Week, a weeklong conference sponsored annually by the Church Educational System and BYU's Department of Continuing Education.

BYU Television, available on DIRECTV channel 374, will be broadcast from DIRECTV's satellite at the 119-degree west longitude orbital location and requires an 18-by-24-inch multisatellite dish and receiver.

RICKS WINS BOWL GAME

The Ricks College Vikings defeated the Snow College Badgers of Ephraim, Utah, 45-14 in the Real Dairy Bowl. The Vikings ended their season 8-3.

Ricks quarterback Marc

Dunn's outstanding season earned him Offensive Player of the Year honors from the National Junior College Athletics Association. In 2000 he broke eight school records, passed for an average of 395.5 yards per game, completed more than 60 percent of his passes, and threw for 42 touchdowns.

Because of changes brought about by Ricks College's transition to four-year status (as BYU—Idaho), this was the school's final year of participation in intercollegiate football.

AUSTRALIAN MEMBERS AID EAST TIMORESE

Members in Australia provided a Christmas aid package to the people of East Timor. A 187,000-pound shipment of gardening tools, food, and clothing was sent from Sydney to East Timor in December.

Australian Church officials presented the aid to Xanana Gusmao, president of the East Timorese National Council, who oversaw delivery of the goods to the East Timorese.

Australian members donated 22,000 pounds of children's new and used clothing as part of the package, and gardening tools and food were purchased with funds raised from a Church welfare farm in Griffith, New South Wales, Australia.

"This is a great Christmas present for my people," said Mr. Gusmao, who expressed particular appreciation for the gardening tools. "While it is good to give hungry people food, it is best to give them tools so they can use



Australian Church officials help local East Timorese unload boxes of humanitarian aid sent from Australian members.

them to grow their own crops and become self-sufficient," he said.

The Church provided other humanitarian assistance earlier this year to East Timorese refugees, including hygiene kits, food, and clothing.

WARD RECEIVES VOLUNTEER AWARD

The Panorama Heights Ward of the Albuquerque New Mexico West Stake recently received an Outstanding Volunteer Group award from the city of Rio Rancho, New Mexico. The ward was recognized in 2000 for service, which included beautifying a local park, cleaning up an illegal dumpsite, and assisting with the mayor's charity ball.

SEA TREK 2001 TO TRACE LDS EMIGRANTS' VOYAGE

Plans are proceeding for a two-month, privately sponsored commemoration of the voyage of thousands of 19th-century Latter-day Saint emigrants from Europe to the United States. On 7 August, ten 1850s replica sailing ships will set sail from Esbjerg, Denmark, making stops in

Copenhagen, Denmark; Göteborg, Sweden; Oslo, Norway; Hamburg, Germany; Hull, Liverpool, and Portsmouth, England; the Canary Islands; and the Bahamas before finishing in New York City on 4 October.

Celebrations are planned at some of the ports of call. Festivities will include ship tours, fireworks, maritime exhibits on LDS migration, computer ancestral research demonstrations, history workshops, and a concert. The musical score of the concert, entitled "Saints on the Seas," is being written by LDS composers. The final celebration will take place at New York's Madison Square Garden.

For more information, visit the Sea Trek Web site at www.seatrek2001.com.

FIVE LDS SIBLINGS STUDY AT JUILLIARD

For the first time in history, five siblings are studying together at the Juilliard School in New York City. **Desirae** (22), **Deondra** (20), **Gregory** (18), **Melody** (16), and **Ryan Brown** (15), members of the Westchester First Ward, New York New York Stake, are studying piano at

the renowned conservatory, which has only 113 piano students and accepts just one of nine applicants. Desirae and Deondra are seniors, Gregory and Melody are freshmen, and Ryan is in the precollege division.

On 14 February, Desirae and Deondra made their professional debut when they performed the Poulenc Concerto for Two Pianos with the Philadelphia Orchestra. Impressed by the sisters' first-place performance at the orchestra's Albert M. Greenfield Student Competition last March, conductor Luis Biava invited them to play as the orchestra's guests.

In spite of the highly competitive environment in which the five siblings exist, the Browns are noted for the harmony that endures among them even when away from the keyboard. Teachers and friends at Juilliard are struck by it, and national and international newspapers and television news programs have highlighted the family's unity in feature stories.

After interviewing the Brown family and filming part of a Sunday Church meeting, the production crew of *60 Minutes*, impressed by what they'd seen, spent two hours of their personal time asking the Brown parents, Keith and Lisa, about the gospel.

Brother and Sister Brown, who moved their family from Alpine, Utah, to New York after all their children were accepted at Juilliard, say the siblings' common interest in music and their upbringing in the Church have created a strong bond among them.

"They look out for each other," says Brother Brown. "Everywhere they go, whether it's to concerts, dances, or just out to pizza, they go together. They're a great influence for good on each other."

"The Church really stresses spending time together as a family, and that's made us close," adds Gregory. "We speak the same language; we help each other stay on track." □

PHOTO BY KURT SUNDELIN



The Wilmington Delaware Stake is headquartered in the city of Wilmington, near which the Christina River meets the Delaware Bay.

The Wilmington Delaware Stake: No Small Wonder

Due to its relatively small size, the U.S. state of Delaware is often referred to by residents as the “Small Wonder,” but the Wilmington Delaware Stake is anything but small. The stake’s boundaries include all of Delaware, the eastern shore of Maryland, and a few eastern Pennsylvania communities.

Although driving between some of the stake’s 11 units can take more than two hours, stake president Joel R. Temple is one who doesn’t let the miles he has to travel interfere with the satisfaction he gets from serving.

A convert of 30 years, President Temple says the work has moved forward in the stake through the efforts of “hosts of faithful members who have given freely of their time, their talents, and their means.”

The first record of the Church in the area goes back to the 1830s, soon after the gospel was restored. During that decade, some missionary activity took place around Wilmington. The Prophet Joseph Smith



visited the Wilmington area in 1839, an event he recorded in his journal. In the early 1840s, most area members moved to Nauvoo.

During the next 100 years, there was little Church activity in Delaware, but in 1941 a branch was organized, and missionary work reopened in 1945. In 1974, the Wilmington stake was formed.

The stake now has nine wards and two branches, with a membership of some 4,000. Many of the members are Eastern Shore natives like Thelma and Jim Moudy, who joined the Church in 1973 after missionaries

knocked on their door. The Moudys’ Delaware roots go back to the late 1600s.

Brother and Sister Moudy enrich the Christiana Ward in Newark, Delaware, with their expertise in telecommunications. Jim, recently retired after 34 years in the telecommunications industry, has served as the stake audiovisual specialist for 14 years, and Thelma also uses her experience in the industry to fulfill Church assignments.

For example, shortly after Thelma was called as ward Relief Society president in the winter of 1999, a snowstorm left the roads too icy for safe travel on a day scheduled for a presidency meeting. Feeling that the meeting needed to take place, she set up a teleconference among the homes of the presidency members. After the teleconference, Thelma concluded that “the work of the Lord can go forward even under adverse circumstances.”

Although corporate downsizing over the last decade has slowed the flow of member move-ins, the stake’s active missionary effort has brought a steady increase in membership, especially during the last five years.

Typical of new converts are Charles and Donna Garman

of the Cambridge Maryland Branch. After the Garmans responded to a Church television advertisement for a free video, two missionaries

WILMINGTON DELAWARE STAKE

Created1974
Number of members 4,061
Number of units9 wards, 2 branches
Number of missionaries currently serving from the stake 44
Temple district	Washington D.C. Temple

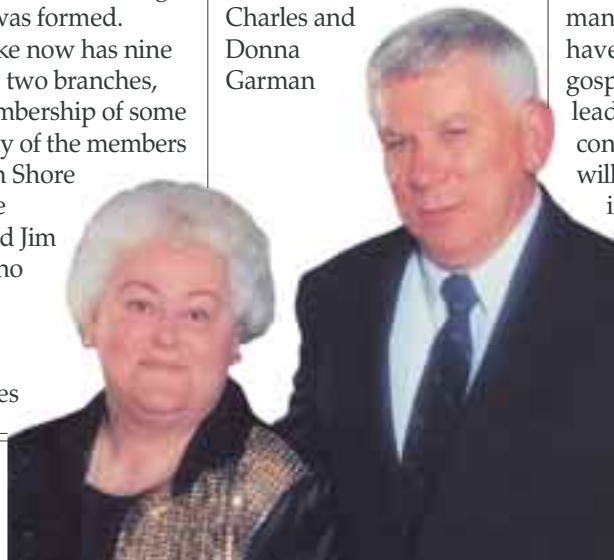
appeared at their door. “The missionaries walked in the door and our lives changed,” Donna recounts.

James Dayton, who was branch president for 12 years and one of the first members of the Cambridge Branch when it was formed in 1971, soon started visiting the family with the missionaries. Developing a friendship with the Garmans, he invited Charles to help with a display for the branch’s community Pioneer Day Celebration in July 1997. It wasn’t long before the Garmans were attending Sunday services and were baptized.

“I felt like one of those people who said they always were Latter-day Saint but didn’t know [about the Church],” Donna said. “It was like coming home.” Like the Garmans, many others in the area have “come home” to the gospel, and members and leaders in Delaware are confident the Church will continue to flourish in the area.—Sharon

**Lance Sundelin,
Christiana Ward,
Wilmington
Delaware Stake** □

Thelma and Jim Moudy



Comment

A New Perspective on Motherhood

Thank you for the article "Time and the Single Parent" (July 2000). I am not a single parent, but as the

wife of a bishop, I spend much of my time alone attending to the needs of our five children. It becomes difficult at times to remain focused on what is important and not to get totally smothered by everyday mundane chores.

Many truths hit home for me as I read the article, especially the

statement, "I had succumbed to an illusion: that the purpose of the family was to support the housework, rather than vice versa. We need to remember that the purpose of our children is not to help keep our homes in order; rather, the purpose of our homes is to help us rear righteous children [and]

build eternal relationships."

The article helped me change my whole outlook on my role as a mother, strive to make positive memories for my children, and listen to them more and give fewer instructions and commands.

Loukia Lerios
Strubenvale, South Africa



Making the Most of This Issue

M A R C H 2 0 0 1

emeritus member of the Seventy, shares seven ideas for unlocking the power of presidencies, p. 16.

Home Teachers and Visiting Teachers

Find the monthly messages on pp. 2 and 57.

Learning a Prophet's Lessons

Can the Prophet Joseph Smith's early experiences with the first principles and ordinances of the gospel strengthen you? Find out on p. 50.

In Danger of Drowning!

A simple fishing trip becomes a life-and-death situation. Turn to p. 30 to read the dramatic answer to a father's prayers for his two sons.

What Lessons Can Your Child Teach You?

Four mothers recall insights they gained through their children, p. 27.

Perspectives for Leaders and Teachers

- Read how vital it is for teachers to help class members develop a love for the word of God, p. 69.

- Find the general Relief Society presidency's ideas on missionary work, convert retention, and activation on p. 68.

- Read tips for teaching President Hinckley's counsel to youth, p. 68.

- Help children gain a testimony of prophets as they learn about this year's Primary theme, "Follow the Prophet," p. 69.

Sharing the Gospel with Others

The Atonement is the fundamental doctrine upon which all missionary work can be based, says Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve. "I testify to you that we will

change lives, including our own, if we will teach the Atonement through the Book of Mormon as well as . . . from all of the other scriptures," he says. See p. 8.

Family Home Evening

Most stories from Latter-day Saint Voices can be used for family night. If you want to center a family home evening on the importance and power of prayer, read and discuss "Sand Trap," p. 44.



Did You Know?

Each *Ensign* feature article has gospel topics listed at the end that can suggest subjects for personal study and reflection or provide support material for lessons in the home and Church classrooms.

GOSPEL TOPICS

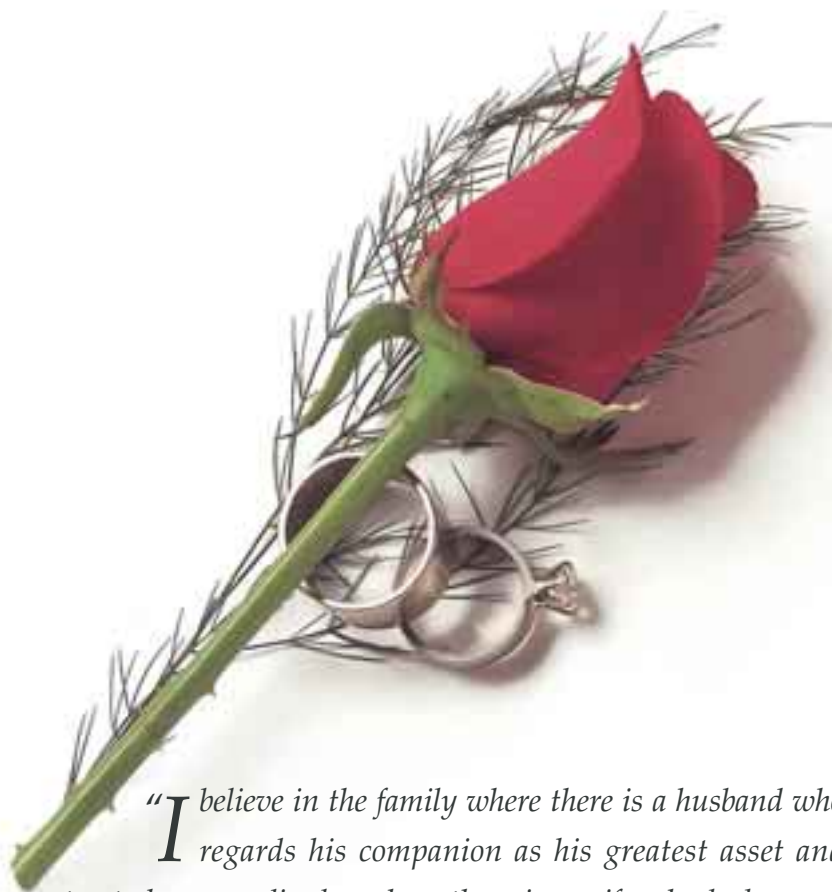
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Land Bountiful, by Garth Oborn



The Bountiful Utah Temple, in its foothill setting north of Salt Lake City, is spotlighted by a setting sun painting the Wasatch Mountain peaks above it in hues of pink and gold on an early autumn evening.



“I believe in the family where there is a husband who regards his companion as his greatest asset and treats her accordingly; where there is a wife who looks upon her husband as her anchor and strength. . . . The cultivation of such a home requires effort and energy, forgiveness and patience, love and endurance and sacrifice; but it is worth all of these and more.”—President Gordon B. Hinckley

